

# The Untrainable Dragon

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Summary: Hiccup has a lot of problems on his hands now: the annual celebration of Berk is coming up and he desperately wants to ask Astrid to it, Alvin is back for blood, and Toothless' old nemesis resurfaces, literally. How will he be able to solve all of these problems?

## 1. Siege on Berk

I was woken by the sound of constant thuds and tapping on the roof. Now normally when someone hears that in the morning, they begin to panic or overreact by shouting and screaming. Not here though. Every morning, that is the sound that I hear that forces me out of bed, whether I'm ready to get up or not. "Hold on, hold on you impatient, overgrown crow" I said as I climbed out of bed. Still exhausted, I got myself dressed and snatched up my helmet that rests on the foot of my bed every night and made my way downstairs where my dad always sleeps. Looking at his enormous motionless body on his bed makes it look like a mattress is sleeping on top of another mattress. Being sure not to wake him up, I tiptoed out of the house and silently closed the door.

Mornings on Berk are always beautiful. The sun rising from the east side of the horizon, its rays reflecting off of the never-ending body of water in a wide array of warm colors of red and yellow and orange. The mist of the sea reaching all the way up the cliff from where I stand and letting it sprinkle across my face. It must have rained a little during the night because the smell of rainwater splattered over the grass and gravel managed to reach my nose. One couldn't even imagine asking for a more perfect morning.

I walked to the left side of the house where I saw him waiting for me on top of the roof. "Hey there, Bud" I greeted my best friend in the world. The Nightfury jumped from the roof and landed right in front of me with the saddle resting in his mouth. He dropped it at my feet (well, foot) and pawed at it, wanting to go for a ride. "In a little

bit, Toothless. Gobber had fishing duty last night and he wants me to help him haul in his keepers".

Toothless looked at me, mildly annoyed. I hated to say no to him, especially with those great big puppy dog eyes he gives me every time. "I'll be right back up and then we'll go for a ride. I promise". Toothless let out a snort and walked the other way. He may be a dragon, but he is surprisingly reasonable. "Thank you. I'll be back soon."

I walked down to the docks on the east side of the island to find that Gobber isn't back yet. \_What the? Where is he? He's never late. \_I continued to pace back and forth, waiting for my old teacher's arrival with the fish. About ten minutes passed until I finally saw him in his sailboat waving at me. He pulled his boat to the side of the dock and started to toss me the nets of fish he caught overnight. "Sorry I'm late Hiccup, I had a nasty fight with this last net of fish that nearly pulled me overboard. Nothing ol' Gobber can't handle", he said, swinging his artificial arm in my face.

"Sounds dangerous, wish I could've been there to help you out" I said jokingly. "Take as many nets as you can, we'll come back for the rest later." I picked up about five nets of fish and began walking off the dock and up to the wooden catwalks that protrude from the cliff side, and slowly made my way back up to solid ground.

"You should 'ave seen it, Hiccup. That last net of fish seemed to realize that they were going to be used for a feast later on and began to swim together downward into the sea. Almost lost mah grim on 'em, but they were no match for my strength as I hauled them into the boat." "Hey, that's right! The festival of Berk is coming up this week. I forgot about it", I said, feeling stupid that I forgot about the entire festival. After all, I am the son of the chief and he is setting up the entire thing.

"Yep, five more days, then we feast like champions. And I have an idea of who you're taking to it, Hiccup." "Taking," I asked stupidly. "Oh come on now, I see how you've been laying your eyes on the lass", he said winking at me. "Astrid? Nah Gob, she and I are just friends", I lied; slightly embarrassed that he brought that up. I have had a big crush on her for a long time now, but I was still afraid to admit it. "Yeah right. I saw how she kissed you after you woke up from that coma. I'd say you two are a little more than just friends." "Well, we'll just have to see what happens at the festival", I said, wanting him to stop talking about it. "Fair enough. Now lets get these fish up to the mess hall."

We both heard a loud growling noise up above our heads. I looked up to see a defensive Toothless standing over the edge of the cliff. His ears were pulled back and his eyes narrowed to slits. "Toothless, what's wrong Bud?" He motioned out to the sea, telling me there was something out there. I looked out to the ocean and I did see something: ships, lots of them. But not just any ships, even from this far away, I could immediately identify who those ships belonged to. "Outcasts", I said under my breath. Right after I said it, I could see something being launched out of one of the ships, coming straight for us.

"Look out!" I shouted to Gobber, and we both ran backwards to avoid being crushed by the gigantic projectile. A large boulder collided

with the side of the cliff, making a large cracking sound. The massive rock then fell downwards and crashed straight through the catwalk, leaving a massive gap between us, and the rest of the catwalk.

Again, a boulder was launched from one of the ships, this one hit the wall and fell on the catwalk behind us, leaving a giant gap behind us as well, leaving Gobber and I stranded on this one piece of the catwalk untouched by giant rocks. "Oh Gods!" I shouted, realizing there wasn't any way off. A third rock came now. This one hit so close overhead that the impact caused both Gobber and I to drop the fish.

"Toothless!" I cried out. He looked down at me in panic, at first not sure of what to do. Then he jumped down from the cliff, and used his wings to flap down on the catwalk: the only problem was he landed on the catwalk that was separated from the one I was on.

We both yelled as we heard another boulder hit the side of the wall. He turned his back and tried to extend his tail out to me so I could climb on, but he was still too far. The ships were getting closer now. "I can't reach you Bud!" I cried, trying to reach for his tail. Suddenly, I felt a large hand pick me up. "Gobber! What are you do-AHHHH", I shouted as he threw me over to Toothless. I grabbed onto his tail, pulled myself onto his body and he lowered me onto the catwalk. "Gobber! Jump!" It was a horrible idea, but it was the only one I could think of.

Gobber backed up as far as he could go, then he ran and jumped over to the other side of the catwalk. Miraculously, his fake hook hand snagged onto the wooden surface and he then proceeded to dangle there. Toothless and I helped him to his feet and he had to steady himself so he didn't fall off. "Run!" I shouted. The three of us ran as fast as we could up the remainder of the catwalk as more and more boulders were launched at us. We each avoided them and made our way up to solid ground.

The ships hadn't gone unnoticed; the entire village was running around, climbing up to the catapults and getting ready to defend the island. Gobber went into his hut to gather weapons ready while me and Toothless ran back to our house to get his saddle on. We reached where I last left the saddle and proceeded to put it onto Toothless as fast as I could.

The massive rocks were now reaching over the cliff and demolishing the buildings. One after the other, rocks flew in and destroyed everything in their path. "Hiccup!" I turned to see my dad panting and had a worried look on his face. "What in Thor's name is going on?!" he demanded. "It's the Outcasts." I explained. "They're attacking the island!" The massive chief turned his back to me and called for his dragon, "Thornado! Come!" he yelled. Then, the Thunderdrum appeared, dad hopped on and flew off to help his fellow Vikings.

Finally I got the saddle hooked up. I hopped on Toothless' back, hooked my prosthetic leg into the mechanism that controls his tail (also prosthetic), and we flew off, preparing for battle.

We quickly launched ourselves into the air and flew to the east, where the ships were coming from. Dodging every boulder wasn't

exactly easy, each rock that flew inches passed my head was then replaced with another rock that too flew inches from my head. On rock was coming right for us though, and we didn't have time to steer out of the way. Suddenly, a blur of brown flew in front of me, and it grabbed the boulder heading for the two of us in its mouth. "Fishlegs!" "Hiccup, what is going on here?" the giant teen asked me in a worried expression.

"I have no idea Fishlegs, all I do know is that the Outcasts are firing on us", I said, pointing to the ships. "Lets go get them! Meatlug is getting hungry", Fishlegs said, patting his Gronckle on the head. With that, he and I charged into the ships, prepared to cause as much damage as we possibly can.

"Toothless, plasma blast!" I commanded. The Nightfury then shot a white hot ball of fire into one of the ships, and saw it cause a massive hole in it and it proceeded to sink, the inhabitants of the ship jumped off and proceeded to swim to their fellow boats. We circled around and saw Fishlegs and Meatlug firing lava blasts at the ships, some hitting the ships, and others actually hitting the Outcasts themselves, causing them to scream in a horrible tone and also jump off the ship in attempts to cool themselves off.

Toothless circled around and we were then heading straight for the right side of a ship. "Fire!" Toothless fired another fireball into the ship. This ship must have been carrying some explosives or gunpowder because the entire thing erupted in a massive explosion.

We quickly steered away from the fiery cloud and continued to blast holes in multiple ships. I looked to the island and saw my dad riding his Thunderdrum into the battle. The dragon let out a concussive shockwave from its mouth, blowing an entire ship backwards, and sending the Outcasts flying into the water. \_Way to go dad! \_Dad then stopped and he looked down at one of the ships. I looked in the direction my dad was looking and saw the one person I despised the most: Alvin, leader of the Outcasts.

"What is it you want, Alvin?" My dad shouted down to the man. "Simple. I want your dragons Stoick." That answer made my blood run cold. He wanted our dragons? "I assumed you wouldn't simply just hand them over to us, so I went with the next best option." He explained in his insanely gruff and raspy voice. "Well forget it, Al! You're never getting your hands on our dragons!" I shouted out to him.

He looked at me and smiled. "Ah, it's the 'dragon conqueror'. I could use your help to ya know. I can't possibly handle these dragons by myself." "I'll never help you. Why do you even want \_our \_dragons anyway? Cant you just go off and find your own?" I asked. "Your island is the one with the most dragons. Why go aimlessly searching for them when I can simply come here?"

Then my dad came back in with something to say, "Alvin, it's hopeless. We've wiped out most of your fleet. Surrender now, and we'll leave the rest of your boats intact." Alvin scratched his long beard, pondering the offer. He looked around and saw that Me, Fishlegs and Dad have indeed destroyed most of the boats. He looked back at my dad and growled, "Fine, you win today. But don't think this is the last you've seen me", he warned. "Boys! Turn the ships around! They've got us", he ordered his men and they let out a

disappointed moan.

With that, the ships started to turn around and go back to where they came from. Dad ordered us to go back to the island and tell everyone to meet in the dining hall. The island of Berk has a lot to talk about now.

## 2. The Meeting

"How in Odin's name could this have happened?"

"Why did he attack our island?"

"Is he going to do it again?"

"We have to protect our dragons!"

"Everyone calm down!" My dad shouted out, trying to calm the panicked tribe.

"Alvin came to our island in an attempt to steal the dragons, thanks to the valiant efforts of these two young men, Alvin has been defeated once again", he said gesturing towards Fishlegs and me.

"Well, what's to stop him from coming back?" asked one of the troubled Vikings, and many others shouted out in agreement.

"Listen everyone!" he bellowed out, "Nothing is to stop him from coming back again. But we have something that he doesn't, and that thing would be the possession of dragons. As long as we keep it that way, we will always have the upper hand", he said trying to comfort them. And for the most part, it did.

Well, most of them.

"I have something to say, Stoick." Oh Gods, why does HE have to come to every meeting? All he ever does is complain about our dragons and mentions all the bad luck that they have supposedly brought us, and doesn't even bother to look at how much good they have done in our lives since they began living with us. With a sigh, my dad said,

"Go ahead, Mildew."

"Thank you," the extremely elderly man said clearing his throat.

"I have a suggestion: let him have the dragons!" Oh Thor, here we go again. "If all he wants is our dragons, why not let him have them? If he gets what he wants, he'll leave us alone, won't he?" His words caused some people to nod and agree with him, but not everyone.

"Mildew, if he gets his claws on our dragons, not only would he continue to ravage this island with them, but every island he will be able to find! We can't let that happen," my dad said in a surprisingly calm voice.

Mildew glared at the mountainous man, as if trying to stab him in his

heart with only his eyes. "You're a fool, Stoick. Letting these dragons still live here." "No he's not! You're the fool!" There she is! Astrid

"All you ever do is whine and complain about how 'evil' the dragons are, and you overlook all the great and wonderful things they each have brought into our lives!"

She is so beautiful when she's angry. The way her eyes light up when she is speaking her heart and soul out to others.

"Poor, young, naïve, little girl. You'll learn about the evils of dragons soon enough. You all will sooner or later!" And with that, he marched out of the hall and went back to his hut.

"That man is going to be the end of me, I swear!" said the chief as he rubbed his temples. "Uh, Dad?" I asked, trying to gain his attention. "Yes son?" "What about the Festival for Berk? Is that still going to continue?" The other villagers agreed with my question, they all started to talk amongst themselves.

"That's right, what about the festival?"

"It's not canceled is it?"

"Will we still be able to celebrate?"

"That is a good question, son. Yes! The festivities shall continue," he said with a smile on his face. All the others sighed with relief, including me.

"We will set up a clean up crew to clean up the debris leftover so we can have this festival without any hazards. Would anyone like to volunteer for the first shift?" I raised my hand.

"Thank you son. Anyone else?" "Eh, why not? I've got nothing goin' on today anyway. Count me in, Stoick," said Gobber.

"Much appreciated, old friend. Now if you two could get star-" he was cut off by Astrid, "I'd like to help out, Mr. Haddock." Oh Gods. She volunteered to help clean up with me? Is she expecting me to ask her to the festival? Does she just want to be with me? Oh Odin why am I so horrible when it comes to women?

"Your help is welcomed, Astrid. The three of you can get started on the clean up right away while I plan the festivities. Everyone is dismissed! Go about your day," Dad shouted out with glee.

Astrid looked over at me with a smile that revealed her teeth. My heart is beating faster now. Gobber noticed I was standing frozen looking at her. He elbowed me in the ribs and gave me a well-intentioned wink.

This is going to be an extremely long day.

### 3. Toothless' Nemesis

Cleaning up all the debris on the island was way easier said than done. Pieces of wood were scattered everywhere: through shattered

windows, hanging off of trees, even little splinters have been found in between the teeth of some dragons. The plan was to gather as much wood as the three of us can find and place them in a pile in the back of the mess hall for a bonfire so big that Odin himself will be toasty warm.

"Alright, 'ere ya go, one wagon for each of you. Pick up as much as you can and the two of you report back here in two hours. Are we clear?" "Yes, Gobber," Astrid and I replied in unison. "You two start cleaning up the town while I go help repair the catwalks." With that, he hobbled himself over to the catwalks. "Well, lets go, Hiccup, that wood won't pick itself up!"

I didn't understand why she was such in a good mood today, she normally always finds something negative to say, or find a clever way to poke fun at how small and scrawny I am. What is she up to?

We dragged our wagons down the hillside and into town where the most damage was done. Gigantic holes were found in each and every house, and I could hear Mildew throwing a fit in his house from all the way down here. Astrid began picking up all the scraps of she could find that were littered across town, and I immediately began working as well.

We have been cleaning up for about half an hour, but we had barely made any progress, and our wagons couldn't hold much more wood. I looked over at Astrid: oh Gods she's beautiful. The way her long blond hair just dangles over her shoulders as she bends down to pick up scraps. This labor didn't seem to faze her though because she had a bright smile on her face, as if she is glad she is serving her community.

My stomach continued to do somersaults. \_Come on you wuss just ask her out! It's the perfect opportunity! \_I gulped, and as subtly as I could, I began picking up scraps that lead straight to her. I got closer and closer.. \_Oh Gods what if she says no?\_ I shook that thought away and continued advancing toward her. Finally I reached normal conversing distance.

I cleared my throat, "Uh, hey Astrid." "Hey Hiccup. I saw what you and Fishlegs were doing to Alvin's ships. That was intense," she said gleefully, punching me in the arm. "Heh, well, I had to do what I had to do. No big deal. I'm sure you would have done the same thing. By the way, where were you during the fight?" "I'm sorry. The loud noises the explosions were causing scared Stormfly and I couldn't get her to calm down enough to attach her saddle." "A dragon that's afraid of loud noises? That seems a little odd," I said confused. \_What are you doing?! Don't insult her dragon! \_"Uhh, not that there's anything wrong with Stormfly, she's a great dragon. I mean under pressure I'm sure all dragons-" I was cut off by her, "It's okay Hiccup, I knew what you meant." \_Oh thank Thor. NOW ASK HER!\_

"Hey Astrid?" "Yes Hiccup?" I gulped nervously. "With the festival only being a few days awa-" "Oh I know! I'm so excited for it! It'll be my first time celebrating it with Stormfly! You must be excited too, taking Toothless to it and all." "Uh, yes. I'm sure that he'll have a great time. But there was something I wanted to ask you." "What is it?"

\_Ok, you can do this\_

\_The moment of truth\_

\_I'm gonna ask her\_

"Would you-" "Well look at what we have here" interrupted Snotlout, with his annoying and overbearing voice, he was followed by Fishlegs and the twins, Tuffnut and Ruffnut. "Looks like the two love birds are building a nest," he teased. "I still think she could do better," whispered Ruffnut into Tuffnut's ear. He grinned at that comment.

"Wait a second guys," said Astrid, setting down a pile of wood scraps. "You four just came all the way down here to make fun of Hiccup and me? That's a little sad," I smiled, happy at the thought she just said the words 'Hiccup and me'. "I'm not making fun of you!" Fishlegs shrieked, "I just came because Snotlout told me to." "Well as long as the four of you are down here, you might as well make yourselves useful; and help us clean up." "Nah, I'm good. Ruff? Tuff? How about you guys? You wanna help out?" "We didn't come to work," Ruff said, "We came to watch," said Tuff.

"I'll help out, Hiccup!" "Thank you, Fishlegs. At least you have some decency." The three of us continued to work for a few more minutes as the other three watched. The place was finally looking clean. "Alright, Astrid, Fishlegs, I think we've got it. Great jo-" I felt the earth shake beneath my feet (again, \_FOOT\_). "What in the name of Odin's son was that?" Asked Tuffnut. "Either we're having an earthquake, or Fishlegs is hungry," joked Snotlout. The trembling came again. This time it lasted a little longer.

I heard a loud roar coming from my house. Toothless, at the speed of light, ran over to our position and stopped right in front of me, saddle in his mouth. "What's happening bud?" He dropped the saddle, looked at the ground and growled. \_Oh no. "Toothless, don't tell me it'sâ€¦\_Him \_again." He looked at me, worried. The trembling came back, longer and stronger now. A few yards in front of us, a trail began to form made out of mounds of dirt; and it was moving this way. "Oh no." Not half a second after I said that, the 25-foot long dragon erupted from the earth. It's spherical shape, no limbs and 15-foot long tail covered in spikes and huge gaping mouth filled with an endless row of spiraling teeth; it was the unmistakable Whispering Death.

Toothless had his ears laid back again and looked ready to pounce at the dragon that was hovering a few feet over our heads. "Not this guy again!" Shouted out Snotlout. Last time we dealt with this dragon, Toothless went off on a frenzy and was thirsty for blood because of an old rivalry that these two seem to share. I looked over at Toothless he looked back at me. I got the saddle and started to frantically hook it up to him. The Whispering Death, looking straight at us, growled. Toothless returned the growl. Before I could loop the final belt hole, he jumped away to the side and fired a white ball of fire at the old rival, but missed. "Toothless, get back here! You need my help!"

The Whispering Death then fired a spiraling wall of fire at me. I froze. Not the best thing to do at the time, but I just couldn't react. At the last moment, Toothless pounced at me, pushing me out of



the path of the fire. I lay on the ground, watching the Night Fury firing back and forth at the villainous dragon. Astrid came up behind me, grabbed under my arms and pulled me out of the warpath. I stood up and watched helplessly as my best friend fought with his old nemesis.

After he shot the last fireball, Toothless leapt at the dragon, dug his claws into its scales, and hung on for dear life. The Whispering Death let out an agonizing roar, trying to wiggle the black dragon off of its body. "No!" I shouted. The gigantic green dragon then flew aimlessly around town while Toothless held on with all of his might. The Whispering Death was on a complete rampage now: he was flying straight through houses (creating even more debris that I had to pick up), but the Nightfury refused to let go. "We have to do something!" "Like what? There is no way we stand a chance against that thing," replied a worried Astrid.

The enormous ball of not-so-joyful joy then plunged into the earth, with Toothless still clinging to his back. "Toothless!" The six of us ran to the hole, and I thanked the Gods that Toothless was smart enough to let go before the huge dragon continued to burrow through the ground. With a mighty leap, the Nightfury jumped out of the hole and landed next to me. I hugged him instantly. "Bad dragon! I thought that we had a deal! When we saw that dragon again, I was going to help you," I said, reminding the well-intentioned dragon. He looked at me apologetically. "It's okay, bud. But just let me help you," he looked at me and nodded his head. "Thank you." I turned and faced the other Vikings. It looks like the Whispering Death is heading back towards the forest. "Guys, get ready. We've got another dragon to train."

#### 4. Mildew's Warning

The fight between the two dragons didn't go unnoticed by the villagers. Everyone was crowded around the giant gaping hole that the Whispering Death created and mumbling to themselves what could have done such a thing.

The moment Stoick caught word of the event, he hurried himself over to the scene. He arrived to where the villagers were huddled together and asked, "What in the blazes happened here?" He walked over to the hole and gasped, instantly remembering what dragon was capable of creating a crater like this.

"I'll tell you what happened, Stoick" shouted out Mildew from the middle of the crowd, gripping his large walking stick. "It was your boys' damned dragon!"

"Mildew, Toothless never would have done this. He's perfectly harmless. Now, did somebody ELSE witness this event?" No one replied. Everyone was either helping repair the village somewhere else, or had run in fear of the massive trembling.

"Looks like you've got no one to inform you on the subject but \_me, \_chief," Smirked Mildew.

"Mildew, shut your gob before I permanently shut it for you! Judging by the massive crater and the long underground tunnel left behind, it's clear the Whispering Death has returned." This news made the

villagers either gasp or cry.

"The Whispering Death?"

"I thought your son got that one under control!"

"What if it kills our sheep?"

"Everyone pipe down!" The worrisome villagers' paranoia was no match for the booming voice of their chief.

"Listen, Hiccup and his friends aren't here right now, that can only mean they went off to find and train this monster. The situation is well at hand," Stoick said, feeling confident that his son wouldn't fail him.

"Ah, but what if your boy isn't capable of taming a beast as wild as this, so called, '\_Whispering Death'?\_" The chief looked at the elderly man, forcing himself not to deliver a punch so hard to this man's stomach, he'll fly back to two months ago.

"Hiccup is the best dragon trainer on the island. If there's anyone who can calm this thing down, it's him."

"I think our chief puts a little too much faith in the boy. Sure he hypnotizes the animals with his fancy hand movements," he twiddled his hands and fingers in the air for emphasis, "but the creatures will, soon enough, revert back to their original lifestyle, killing our livestock, our crops, our fellow Vikings! Why, even \_your\_ dragon, Stoick, that blue abomination from the gods will eat you alive. "

"That 'abomination' has a name: Thornado. And He has been loyal to me since the day we got him under control."

"For now. You'll see. All our dragons will turn against us!"

"You can't possibly know that for a fact!"

"Stoick, I have been a resident on this island longer than you have been alive. I've seen the true nature of dragons. It's only a matter of time before each and everyone of our dragons turns against us once again!"

The chief glared at the old man.

"Dragons have brought nothing but trouble and bad luck to this island, and the solutions your boy came up with have made the situation even worse!"

"Excuse me, my son has done wonderful things for this island! Why, he even gave you a nice lawn ornament," Stoick joked, referring to the giant statue of Thor that Hiccup and the gang built in hopes of reducing the lightning storms they've been having.

"Ah yes, that statue. I've been meaning to politely ask the boy to remove that thing from my property! It's beginning to rust."

"I'll see to it that he moves it. But the dragons stay. Nothing you can say will change my mind. They. Live. Here."

Mildew was outraged. "You're a bloody fool, Stoick! A mad man!"

"I don't believe I'm the one who has gone mad. Return to your business everyone! Hiccup will be back with that dragon wrapped around his little finger. I'm sure of it." The villagers still weren't fully convinced, but at least they weren't panicking anymore.

Stoick glared at the old man, still trying to restrain himself from beating this poor excuse of a man to a pulp. Then he walked away, being the bigger man, both in the literal and metaphorical term.

As the crowd cleared up, Mildew realized there was nothing more he could do. He turned his back to the chief and walked back to his house.

There was no way that he could get rid of the dragons all by himself, he needed help.

And he knew just the Outcast to talk toâ€¦

## 5. Finding the beast

"Can we go now? We've been searching for this thing for hours," complained Tuffnut.

"We can't give up now! We're close to it, I know it," I said, trying to sound confident in myself. But honestly, I wasn't even sure if we were even remotely close to where this thing has gone.

We're in the middle of the woods, searching for the Whispering Death after it attacked Toothless and me in the middle of the village. Fishlegs, Snotlout and Astrid all left on their dragons to see if they could spot this thing from the sky, leaving me with Tuffnut and Ruffnut.

And frankly, I want this thing trained, pronto like!

Each time this thing shows its face, Toothless goes berserk and won't let anyone help him. I need to get this thing under control so I can put an end to their little squander once and for all!

The three of us have been searching in the woods for about four whole hours now. Our feet aching, our mouths parched and dry, our faces dripping with sweat. The twins' dragonheads Barf and Belch were even starting to look a little woozy. Toothless is walking right at my side, helping me track this thing down.

\_Ok, think Hiccup, think! What do you know about this thing? It prefers underground; it hates sunlight, where could it be?\_

One would think that trying to find a massive hole in the ground in the woods wouldn't be that bad. But guess what? It's worse!

I'm looking for any signs that the dragon has flew by here, like a scratched up tree, or maybe some scales? Nope. Nothing. Zip. Nada.

As we continued our fruitless search, I heard flapping noises up above our heads.

"What is it? Is it the Whispering Death?" Asked Ruffnut. "Remember, once we get that thing under control, I want it!" Proclaimed Tuffnut. Then the two of them proceeded to bicker and physically harm each other, shouting out very interesting insults with some of the most colorful vocabulary I have ever heard.

"Stand down guys, it's just the others," I said calmly.

Stormfly, Meatlug and Hookfang landed smoothly on the ground. Their riders jumped off and ran right next to me.

"Any sight of it?" I ask Astrid hopefully.

"Nope. And judging by the way it looks here, I take it you guys haven't had any luck either." I shook my head.

"I told you I think I saw it over to the north side! But you didn't listen to me," cried out a discouraged Snotlout. "Snotlout, for the last time, that wasn't a dragon. That was a boulder covered in moss!" I love it when she yells at him like that.

"So what should we do Hiccup?" Fishlegs wondered as he held Meatlugs' head in his arms.

I looked over at the five of them, trying to think of something positive to say, but I couldn't. Toothless nudged his head under my hand and I petted him softly.

I sighed. "Let's call it a day. We've been out here long enough." The group let out a sigh of relief.

"Let's go bud," I said, climbing aboard Toothless. But as I did, he let out a growl. I jumped off. "You ok there Too-" he bolted the opposite direction we were heading.

"No! Wait! Astrid, we have to go after him! I think he's on its scent." She nodded, climbed on Stormfly, and helped me up and sat right behind her. The other Vikings climbed on their dragons as well. "Follow Toothless! Don't let him out of your sights," I ordered. The dragons flapped their massive wings and we were airborne.

We flew after him as fast as we could, never letting him leave our sights. "Bring her down lower so I can talk to him." "Aye aye," replied Astrid. The Nadderhead lowered its body so it was barely skimming the top of the trees.

He's right below us, running at full speed. "Toothless!" He didn't hear me. "Toothless," I yell again. Still nothing. I yell a third time and he looks up at me, but continues to run. He turns his head forward again, and keeps running. Then he stops.

"Wait! Wait! Wait! He stopped back there!" Astrid turned Stormfly the other way, and the other Vikings followed as we descended to the ground.

I hop off and run to the Nightfury. He's looking at something.

"Toothless, what's wrong?" He turns and looks at me, then points to the ground.

A spike.

A spike similar to the one that hit Toothless in the leg when we last saw this thing. It clearly belonged to the Whispering Death.

I picked it up and examined it. The other Vikings were approaching behind me. "Guys, I think we're close." I held up the spike and they looked at it in awe, particularly Tuffnut. "It's sharp! I want it!"

Not a moment after he said that, the earth began to tremble and we were each thrown off balance.

A trail of mounded up dirt began to make its way from over by the trees to where we were standing.

Toothless hissed. I held him tight, not wanting him to lunge after it.

The earth beneath our feet exploded and out came the Whispering Death. It's six rows of razor sharp teeth rotating at full speed, its long, spiked tail whipping aimlessly in the air.

"Astrid, Fishlegs, hold down Toothless! I don't want him running off again." They walked slowly to my dragon and held him tight, not letting him move from their iron grip.

I gulped and walked forward.

Slowly, ever so slowly I made my way to the dragon, making sure its eyes were locked onto me.

It dived down, now right in front of me. My heart began to beat faster now, and I could feel myself beginning to shake. I got a grip on myself and held out my hand, hoping the dragon will accept my offer of peace by bowing down its head and resting it into my palm.

It looked at me. Its pupil-less eyes I could feel were staring directly into mine, as if staring down into my soul. I can hear it breathing heavily and it snorted into my hand a few times. After what felt like forever, the dragon made its choice.

Rather than lowering its head, it lunged. It reached straight for my outstretched arm in an attempt to bite it clean off.

Not wanting to lose another one of my limbs, I snapped my hand back just as the giant gaping mouth closed shut.

\_Now what? What do I do?! This has never happened before!\_

\_Its chin! Maybe if I can scratch its chin\_

I reached out, trying to make contact with its chin to try to relax it.

The good news was that I scratched the chin. The bad news was it didn't like that either. It let out an ear piercingly loud roar and dived at my feet. I jumped out of the way. It missed me and instead went digging in the ground. I looked over to the others, their eyes full of fear.

I attempted to run back to them, but the Whispering Death came up from under the ground right in front of me. I fell backwards. It swung its tail down to the ground trying to hit me, but I rolled out of the way, got to my feet and hightailed it to the woods with it in hot pursuit.

I ran as fast as my real foot and my prosthetic foot could carry me. Up ahead a cliff was visible. It was the cove where I found Toothless! Before I fell in, I skidded to a stop. I looked behind me to find the limbless dragon still flying after me. I looked left and right but there was nowhere I could run to. I was a sitting duck.

I looked behind the dragon and saw Toothless running after it. He fired a hot blast from his mouth and it hit the Whispering Death's right wing. It bellowed in pain and fell to the ground. However, the momentum it had from flying so fast kept its body rolling on the ground, and it was about to roll over me!

With no other option, I jumped.

I caught onto a tree that was protruding from the side of the cove's wall and dangled there while the huge dragon fell into the pit. It hit the ground right below me with a mighty thud.

It seemed dazed for a second, but it quickly got itself together. It looked up and saw me hanging precariously from this conveniently located tree. It narrowed its eyes and its mouth flew open.

\_Oh no. This is it!\_

It rose from the ground and snapped its mouth shut right beneath my feet. It missed!

But how?

It tried to snap its jaws shut again, but it just couldn't reach me. I looked below the dragon and saw the problem: its tail had been crushed under a huge boulder during the fall, and that prevented it from eating me whole. But I was still in danger.

Its mouth was wide open below me, the rows of teeth continuing to spiral around the circumference of the mouth. I was losing my grip.

"Hiccup! No!" I looked up and saw the gang looking down over the cliff and saw me hanging off the tree.

"What's up Hiccup? Just hanging around?" Snotlout laughed, amused with his horrible pun. Astrid slapped him. "Not now! Get a log or something! We need to reach him!" They ran out of view and I was left with this dragon right below me.

With all my strength I pulled my self up so I could fully stand on the branch. I attempted to climb up the rocks, but I couldn't get a

good grip.

Right above me, I heard flapping. Astrid was riding Stormfly and she held out her hand. I jumped and caught her hand. She had the nadderhead rise a few feet, and she swung me to solid ground, where I saw an anxious Toothless and the gang all aboard their own dragons. I hopped on Toothless and we all flew away from the cove, listening to the bellowing sound of the Whispering Death fade away.

I patted Toothless on the head and he purred gently.

"So how did that work out?" Astrid was flying right beside me.

I looked at her.

"Astrid, I never thought I'd say this," I paused. "But I think this dragon is untrainable."

## 6. The Question

We landed our dragons in the town square where a majority of the villagers were awaiting our news on this dragon. I caught a glimpse of my dad in the crowd (he's not too hard to spot. He is almost seven feet tall€) and he looked at me excitedly.

I walked through the crowd towards my father as my friends hopped off their dragons and proceeded home, except for Astrid. She walked up behind me, wanting to talk with my dad along with me.

"Well, did you find it?" He had a very hopeful expression on his face I almost couldn't tell him what happened. He looked at our depressed faces and knew we weren't going to be the bearers of good news.

"Dad, I've tried everything. Last time I saw this thing, I offered it some food, but rejected it. I reached my hand out to show I wasn't going to harm it, but it nearly took my hand off! I've never had a problem with a dragon like this before."

He looked at us and sighed. "Come on in you two. Tell me everything that happened."

The three of us walked into our house, sat down, and we proceeded to tell my dad about our little misadventure with this thing. When we finished, he sat back in his chair and let out a loud breath. "And you don't think there is anything else you can do to get this thing under control?" "I tried everything I know, but it still won't listen to me! Gods, it wasn't even this hard to train Toothless," I pointed to the Nightfury sleeping on his stone bed. He let out a small roar at the mention of him.

"Look Mr. Haddock," began Astrid, "I saw Hiccup, he did everything in his power to try to calm this thing down. It just won't listen to anything we do." He sat up, "Well, the important thing is that you kids are alright. But you must understand that if this thing truly is untrainable, we must do everything we can to stop it from wreaking havoc across our village. Even if it means we have to take its life."

I gulped at the thought. Ever since dragons moved in with us I hoped we never had to kill a dragon again. I looked at Toothless and remembered the look he gave me when I tried to kill him in the woods after I shot him down. I can't go through in killing this thing! It just isn't me. Well, yeah sure I killed the Red Death, but I had no other choice! It was torturing the other dragons. I couldn't let that continue.

I looked at my dad in the eyes. I knew he was right.

As chief, he always has to make the right decisions, even if they aren't easy. Deep down, I knew this was the right choice. I nodded.

"Good. Now, you two go on. I realize you have lots of work to do at the dragon academy." I nearly forgot I had a class to teach. With all this Whispering Death hubbub I was getting caught up in almost made me forget today's schedule. "That's right! Lets go, Astrid. Come on Toothless!" He heard my call and, in a flash jumped to the front door.

"Thanks for reminding me, dad." "No problem son. Now I've got important things to attend to regarding the upcoming festival of Berk!" "You have fun with that. I'll see you tonight."

Toothless, Astrid and I began to walk to the dragon-training arena. We quickly stopped at Astrid's house to pick up Stormfly, and then we were on our way. Astrid was jumping into her dragon's saddle until I stopped her. "Astrid, wait." "What's wrong?"

\_This is the perfect opportunity to ask! Don't fudge up!\_

"Uh, I was just thinking. It's a beautiful day, how about we just walk to the arena? We do have time to spare anyways." I looked at her hopefully, while also hoping she didn't think this was too forward. She smiled. "Whatever you say, Teach." With that, she hopped off of Stormfly, and the four of us made our way to the arena.

I looked at her. Gods she's so beautiful. The way she always holds her head up high, sticking her chest outward, her long majestic blond hair flowing behind her as she walked. I looked over to Toothless, hoping he could give me any advice. I instantly realized how stupid that sounded and diverted my attention back to Astrid.

We are now about half way there. All we had to do was walk for about fifteen minutes through the woods, and then cross over and onto the wooden long wooden bridge that connected the land to the arena.

Still walking, I turned to Astrid.

"Hey, Astrid?" "Yes?"

\_Just ask her just ask her just ask her just ask her just ask her.\_

"Um, I, uh, just wanted to thank you for saving me from being eaten by the Whispering Death." She smiled. "It's no big deal." "It is a big deal," I corrected. "I would've become dragon food if you hadn't jumped in. I saw the look on everyone else's faces when they saw that



thing; they were scared out of their heads! The way you kept your composure was incredible!"

She blushed a little. Ok, I can do this. "And, I also appreciate it because if I died, I wouldn't be able to ask you this." "Ask me what?" She looked confused.

"I. Um, well. I was wondering if maybe you weren't busy during the festivalâ€¦" I trailed off. Toothless, clearly annoyed by me stuttering, bumped me with his tail. "- OW-Uh if you wanted to go with me," I unintentionally shouted out.

Oh Gods, I did it! I asked! What is she going to say though?

Her face lit up, then she began to laugh. I don't ever think I've seen her laugh before. It seemed so out of character for her. She didn't care though, she continued to laugh, even harder now. I had to admit, I'm pretty nervous. Why was she laughing? Was she embarrassed? Did she think it was hilarious that a geek like me would ask her out? Then she did something I didn't see coming:

She grabbed my arm, pulled me into her and she kissed me.

My eyes nearly jumped out of their eyeholes. As she continued to kiss me, I gave in and returned it. After a few more seconds, she pulled away. "Hiccup, do you know how long I've been waiting for you to ask me that?"

I was shocked.

Really? She was waiting for me to?

"Wai-Wha? You were waiting for me to make the move?" She giggled a little. "Of course! I believe I've made it obvious that I've wanted to spend more time with you. I volunteered for clean-up just so I could be with you."

I knew it!

"And I also knew you were going to ask because you suggested we walk to the arena. You NEVER turn down an opportunity to fly." She had a point there.

"So, it's a date then?" She punched my arm. I'm never going to get used to that. "It's a date. Now come on! We've got to hurry over there before Snotlout tries to teach again."

## 7. The Message

That same night, Mildew had work to do. He couldn't convince these mindless Vikings to deny the belief that dragons were evil creatures, so he's going to force them to give them up. They may hate him now, but they'll thank him once they see how peaceful the island will be once the creatures have left the island.

He got out a piece of paper, a stick with charcoal and a stool, and he proceeded to write his letter.

He wrote and wrote and wrote, silently speaking under his breath as

he did.

It was done:

\_Interested in Berk's wide array of dragons? \_

\_Meet me at the southern shore of Berk to create a deal at 22:00 tomorrow.\_

\_Don't be late\_

\_A friend\_

"Ah, this'll do it."

The crotchety old man took the note, furled it, and tied it with a string. He turned and walked to the corner of the room where he kept his very own pet: a messenger owl. No one on the island knew he had one.

He walked over to the bird, "C'mere Hector, I've got a job for you." The owl flew off its stand and landed on the old man's forearm. He tied the note to Hector's leg snug.

He walked out the front door, passed the giant rusting statue of Thor that must be removed, and stood on the edge of his railings. "Now make sure this gets directly to Alvin," he whispered. The owl leaped from his arm and flew off into the night sky.

All there was left to do now was wait for a reply.

## 8. Preparations

By the time class was finished, the sun was almost touching the west horizon. I let out a massive yawn and dismissed my 'students'.

It was a successful day of training, and when I say successful I mean that we went the entire day without Ruff and Tuff's physical abuse, Snotlout's self obsessions and Fishleg's never-ending babble on every single dragon known to us Vikings. Instead, we worked on aiming, aerial combat and the sign language technique created by Fishlegs himself. It was, indeed, a good training day.

"See you tomorrow, Teach." I looked behind me and saw Astrid sitting on top of Stormfly. Ever since I became the instructor of the dragon academy, Astrid has given me the nickname, Teach. Even though I am the head of this school, I never considered myself a teacher. I always thought of it as me helping my fellow Vikings find a better world where we ride and train dragons instead of mercilessly slaughtering them.

"You don't have to call me that just because I teach here," I say up to her, trying to get her to stop calling me that. "Does it make you feel uncomfortable when I call you that?" "As a matter of fact, it kind of does, yes." She smiled. "Then see you tomorrow, Teach," she yelled, putting emphasis on that last part. Then her and Stormfly ran out of the arena and took off into the sky. I sighed.

I turn to Toothless who was patiently waiting for me over by the

door. "What do you say bud? Ready to go home?" He smiled and proceeded to jump up and down in excitement. "Whoa there, settle down. I know I can't wait to get to my bed. It's been an exhausting day, hasn't it?" He walked to me and forced me to pet under his chin just the way he liked it.

I hopped on his saddle, put in my fake leg into the mechanism controlling his tail, and before we knew it, we were already airborne. He ran straight through the door and took flight. In a matter of seconds, we were soaring over every tree, over a hundred feet in the air. There is no better feeling than flying: the wind pushing against your face and waving through your hair, being able to see your home world at different angles and positions that made them seem as small as a speck and make you feel as if you're a giant. When I fly with Toothless, all the cares and worries I carry with me just vanish into the air and I escape into my own little world of peace and happiness.

Our house is coming up below us and I have Toothless lower us slowly to the ground. We hover about ten feet in the air, then the Nightfury lands in my front yard with barely a thud. I hop off, undo his saddle and the two of us walk inside. "There's my warrior," says my dad getting up from the table and enveloping me in a massive bear hug. He releases me and I am able to catch my breath. "Gee, you're certainly in a good mood," I say to him. "Yes I am. I am looking forward to the first year we celebrate the festival of Berk with our dragons. It promises to be a night to remember!" I haven't seen him this jolly since the day he came back from dragon hunting and he heard how well I was doing in dragon training.

"I'm looking forward to it too, Dad. Listen, I'd love to chat more, but today has been exhausting. I'm going to hit the hay early." He smiled. "Of course. I'll see you in the morning." Toothless and I walked up the stairs and into my bedroom. He leapt onto his stone bed, set it ablaze, curled up into a warm cocoon, and shut his eyes. I walk over to my bed, open the covers and plop down face first into the pillow, passing out almost immediately.

Dad woke me up this time. "Hey, Hiccup, are you awake yet?" I squirm a little. "I am now," I whispered. "Good. If you wouldn't mind, I would appreciate your help in preparing for the festival today." I sat up and yawned. "Yeah, sure. No- no problem." "Great. Get up, get dressed, brush your teeth, eat breakfast, do everything you need to right now and meet me at the great hall in one hour." Rubbing the sleep from my eyes I say "Alright. See you then." The mountainous man then walked down the stairs and out of my sight.

I got out of bed and silently made my way downstairs so I didn't wake up Toothless. He looked so peaceful just lying there I couldn't wake him up. My breakfast wasn't exactly filling, just three pieces of buttered toast and a banana. I brushed my teeth, combed my hair, and finally made my way off to the great hall.

Before I even stepped inside I could hear people working and talking in there. I opened the massive door and saw almost every adult in my village in here, setting up tables, hanging lanterns, bringing in food and storing it in the freezer until the big night. I moved my way along the crowd until I spotted my dad; he was looking at a sheet of paper and discussing something with Gobber. He looked up from the sheet and saw me. "C'mere son, we've got some jobs for you." Oh

great. I reluctantly walk over and looked at the sheet the two of them were looking at. It had specific directions written on it and told who was doing what and who was bringing what to the feast.

"Soon, Mr. Jorgenson will be coming in with boxes full of mugs. I need you to set twenty five mugs at each table," he instructed. I looked at all the tables in the room: there were twenty-five of them. So, twenty-five per table is a total of six hundred and twenty five mugsâ€| Holy Gods, how many Vikings live here again?! Soon, Snotlout's dad walked in with crates full of wooden mugs and handed them to me. I set them down and began to set the tables. Just getting the first table set took a long time, I kept losing count of how many mugs I put on and had to start counting all over again. I finished with the first table, now only twenty-four more to goâ€| Super.

It took nearly an hour, but each long table had twenty-five mugs resting on them. Then I heard my dad call me over, waiting to assign me a new task. Reluctantly, I walked over. "Good job, now I need you to help hang the lanterns." This didn't sound too challenging. I looked up and noticed multiple hooks hanging from the ceiling, and then I looked to the corner of the room where multi-colored paper lanterns were resting in boxes. I grabbed a ladder and began to hang each one on the ceiling. This job turned out not to be so bad after all.

Finally, each individual lantern was hung. I returned to my dad who had one more job for me to do. "Great job son. The hall looks ready. You're final job is to go and help Gobber bring the left over wood and debris from the attack and bring them up here for the fire," he said, gesturing to the hearth in the middle of the room. Gobber was already at the door, "C'mon Hiccup! Don't make me wait here all day." I walked over to him and the two of us walked down to where we stored the debris after the Outcasts attacked the island, which was right behind Gobbers' newly refined weapons shop/dragon dental office.

We loaded up on wood and started to walk back to the hall. Gobber broke the silence. "So?" I look over to him. "What?" He smiled. "Did you ask the lass?"

I let out a chuckle. "Indeed I did, Gob. And you know what? She said yes." He hit me in the back, hard. I cough a little and catch my breath again. "I knew you had it in you ya li'l toothpick!" I didn't appreciate him calling me a toothpick, but I let it slide considering how good of a mood he seemed to be in after I told him the news. "Thank you, I think. Now lets just hope that the Whispering Death doesn't pay us any more surprise visits." Gobber agreed, and he and I deliver the rest of the wood into the hall in silence.

Doing all of this work while the celebration is still four days away seems odd to me. But my dad is in the best mood I've seen him in a while so I don't question him. And, honestly, I'm really looking forward to this just as much as he is. I can't wait to share this day with Toothless for the first time! But that's not the only reason I'm excited. Astrid, the girl of my dreams said yes! To me! Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III. I can't wait to see her in her most beautiful celebration dress and to dance with her for the first time. It is going to be the most perfect night, and I'm not going to let anything ruin it!

## 9. Mildew's Offer

The sun had completely set now. Mildew was waiting at the southern shore of the island just as he said he would in his letter. Hopefully Hector got it to the Outcasts on time. The old man began to pace back and forth on the sand, waiting for the boats to appear.

\_C'mon! Where are they?\_

\_By Loki's throne, if that blasted bird didn't deliver that message, I'll personally-\_

His thought was cut short as he saw a small fleet of ships coming in. He looked at the symbol on the sails: it belonged to the Outcasts.

The boats came to a halt on the sandy shore and two large figures hopped off. One of them was huge and bulky with sausage-like fingers and a long tangled black beard. His helmet had two long curved horns and wore a black fur cape. The man greatly resembled Stoick, if he was a ruthless leader of a non-forgiving tribe of murderers. Mildew knew in an instant that this was Alvin. The man walking at his right hand side wasn't quite as big, but was still decently sized. He had a long mustache, and he too had a curved horn helmet. Spikes were protruding from his right shoulder and wrist as to make him seem more threatening. Mildew didn't know much about this one, but he soon realized that he was Alvin's second in command, Savage.

Grinning widely, Mildew walked down the beach to meet with the two. "I take it you're the one who wrote that letter?" Alvin's voice was cold and raspy. It reminded Mildew of someone scratching their fingernails on a chalkboard. "Correct, sir. And I have noticed that you have taken a liking to our dragons." Savage walked up. "Hold on Alvin. How can we trust this old man? He is, after all, a resident of this island. How do we know this isn't a trap?" Mildew frowned. "I am a trustworthy man. I offer you a proposition." Alvin and Savage exchanged glances. "I give you the instructions on how to steal the dragons, and in return, once the bloody creatures are in your possession, you don't attack Berk."

Alvin scratched his hair covered chin. "Alright, give us these instructions then." Savage looked distraught. Why would Alvin accept this offer so quickly? Mildew smiled wickedly. "Well, in four days time, the festival of Berk will take place. Everyone in the village will be there, leaving their caged dragons unattended. That is when you steal them." Alvin liked the sound of this. "However, the boys' dragon from Hell will be at the festival. Once you have the other dragons, invade the party and take the creature by force. No one in the hall will be prepared for an attack. They will be defenseless and shocked which gives you the element of surprise." "What about the boy," Savage finally spoke up. "Don't we need him to keep the dragons under control?" Alvin looked at Mildew. "The Dragon Conqueror would come in handy." Mildew thought for a moment. "You don't exactly need the boy, he has the secrets of every dragon written down in a book. Get the book, and-" "I've already tried that cursed book! It told us nothing. I need the boy himself!"

"He will be at the festival too, but so will his father. With Stoick there to defend him, there is no way you'll get your hands on the

boy." Alvin realized that trying to snatch the boy would be fruitless with his dad there to protect him. He growled. "Alright, I'll try the book again. Where is it?" "The kids keep it locked up in the arena every night. On the night you capture the dragons, get someone to unlock it for you." The more they talked, the more Alvin liked the plan. However, he wouldn't keep ALL of his promises, he is the leader of the Outcasts after all. Once the dragons belong to him, nothing will stop him from burning this island to a pile of ash and bodies.

Mildew finished talking. "So, you come in on the night of the festival, steal the dragons, and never return. Do we have a deal?" Mildew outstretched his hand. Alvin smiled and laughed. "It's a deal! Pleasure doin' business with ya!" He took Mildew's hand and proceeded to shake it.

This island is as good as dead. And Alvin knew exactly who to kill first: Hiccup.

## 10. Confronting the beast

The next few days flew by in what seemed like an instant. I helped dad get ready for the festival, which is in one more day. Astrid and I have been teaching more classes at the dragon academy, although we are focusing more on self-defense tactics and survival skills for if the Whispering Death decides to resurface again, (see what I did there? Resurface? Because the dragon comes up from- out of.. the.. ground. Look, I'm usually quick with a joke. Get off my back!). As far as I know, no one else knew about me going to the festival with Astrid, and until then, I plan on keeping it that way. If the other Vikings knew about it, we would never hear the end of Snotlout complaining and whining and claiming he's the better-looking Viking over me. I'm not going to deal with that right now.

Finally, class ended for today and Snotlout, Fishlegs and the twins got on their dragons and flew home, leaving me alone with Astrid. She walked up to me slowly. "So," I started, "ready for tomorrow night?" She let out a little laugh. "You know it. I'm looking forward to seeing you there." "Me too!" I mean I'm excited to see you there! Not that I'm looking forward to seeing \_myself \_there. That'd be weird. I see myself every day and I just-" She shut me up by pressing her lips against mine. "I knew what you meant," she said once she pulled her face away from me. She turned around and was walking to Stormfly. "Hey Astrid?" "What's up Hiccup?" I think I was beginning to blush a little because I could feel my face getting warmer. "If you're not doing anything right now, would you, uh, wanna go for a fly?" She smiled, jumped onto her dragon, and nodded.

My face beamed. I hopped onto Toothless and prepared for a great flight. Stormfly and Toothless walked side by side to the door, then stopped. I looked over to Astrid. "Ready?" She nodded again. "On three. One!" "THREE!" Astrid and Stormfly bolted out the door and flew into the sky. Me and Toothless froze for a second. Then he began to run and we took off after the two of them. We caught up with them and I flew so I was level with her on her right side. "I said on three!" I yelled over. "Oh, I heard you, Stormfly was the one who took off," she teased. We both smiled and flew as fast as our dragons could take us. With no destination in mind, we just flew.

Again, flying is the most incredible thing anyone could experience. Making the environment around you become so small and insignificant compared to you soaring through the sky is just a great feeling. But while flying alone can be relaxing, it was always fun to share the moment with someone, especially Astrid. The day she first met Toothless, we 'kidnapped' her and took her on an amazing flight across the sky and over the village. Ever since then, she became as obsessed with flying as I had. Watching her face radiate with joy and happiness as she and her dragon galloped through this never-ending sky makes me feel as though I HAD made a difference in this village. I seem to have made a difference in her life, and I'm thankful for that.

The two (well, four including our dragons) of us flew around the village for about forty minutes until I offered that we show each other some tricks that we've been working on. She accepted and showed her trick first: Stormfly flew ahead, faster than I thought she could go, and proceeded to do multiple gut-wrenching twirls. The dragon began to fly normal again and the two of them flew back to where Toothless and I were hovering. I could tell she was still dizzy because her head seemed to be bobbing up and down. "Beat that!" I patted Toothless' head. "C'mon bud, lets show em!" Toothless took off faster than a bullet. I tightened my grip on the saddle as he then rose higher and higher. "Ok bud, just like we practiced." He hit full speed and rotated his body 180 degrees so I was now hanging upside down. My fake leg unhooked from the foot holder and I fell.

Freefalling was possibly the second best experience I could have asked for. The wind pushing against my face and ruffling up my hair. The first time I went into a freefall like this was when I took Toothless out on our first real flight. Of course we nearly killed ourselves in doing so, but it was exhilarating nonetheless. I heard a whooshing noise coming up and felt as Toothless flew straight under me, catching me in mid air. I quickly landed on the saddle, clipped my leg in the tail mechanism, and let out a whoop of triumph. We flew back to Astrid and Stormfly. Man did she look impressed. "Ok, that was pretty amazing!" I patted Toothless' head again and he purred. "Great job bud." After another forty minutes or so of showing each other some impressive tricks, we decided to call it a day.

We flew back to the village and hopped off our dragons. Astrid walked up and hugged me tightly. "See you tomorrow, Teach." Again with the Teach! "You too." We released each other and began walking back to our houses. Toothless and I walked up to the front door, where my dad was waiting. "Ah, good, you're home," he greeted. "I need you to do me a favor, Hiccup." Oh great. "Dad, I just got back. Can't it wait?" "No, it can't. The hall has run out of fish to fry for tomorrow and I'm very busy right now making arrangements. I need you and Toothless to catch some more." Alright, this doesn't sound too hard. I let out a sigh and accepted the task. "Thank you. I've got to go talk to Gobber. Be sure to be back with plenty of fish!" I walked back over to Toothless as my dad walked down to Gobber's shop. "Sorry bud. We've gotta go get some more fish. Lets go over to the pond in the cove. That's got some good fish in there. What do you say?" The dragon snorted. "I'll take that as a yes." I hopped on and we took to the skies once more.

We flew over to the cove in a heartbeat. But when we got there, I couldn't believe what I saw: The Whispering Death! Its tail is still

stuck under the rock from the last time we encountered it. Luckily for us, it was sleeping. Toothless landed quietly on the ground and I got off. \_My journal! \_I got out my journal and proceeded to draw this thing so we have a more accurate drawing of this creature. I finally finished and it began to move. "Oh Gods." I dropped the journal. Its eyes burst open and looked me up and down. It recognized me and let out a growl, Toothless returned it. "Toothless, it's ok. Let me handle this." Toothless backed off and sat down, observing me. I held up my hands to show this thing that I'm not a threat. It growled at me, showing its teeth. "It's ok, it's ok," I told it. I circled around until the large rock was right next to me. How couldn't it have gotten out? Couldn't it just eat the rock? Maybe it was cautious because it didn't want to keep eating through and possibly bite off its own tail. I, after all, know how it feels to lose a part of your body.

I put my body against the rock and let out a mighty heave. I pushed and pushed as hard as I could, but the darn thing won't budge! I put my shoulder into it and dug my feet in the ground, but still nothing. I was shocked to see Toothless come up behind me, nudging me. He wanted to help! But why? He'd be freeing his old enemy. Maybe he saw that I didn't think this thing was a threat anymore and decided to give me a hand. Or, paw. He ran forward into the rock and immediately, the rock fell backwards, off the beasts tail. The Whispering Death flew into the air, swirling and twirling all around, ecstatic to be free. I smiled at Toothless, proud of him that he was able to overcome his old rivalry to help me. The dragon froze in mid air and looked down at us. I'm not sure, but I think the thing just nodded at me, as if to say \_Thank You. \_After that, it flew straight down into the dirt and burrowed into the underground world, where it belonged. I looked to Toothless, "Good job bud. Come on, let's get those fish."

## 11. The Festival

The day finally arrived; it's the day of the festival. Dad didn't even wake me up, he allowed me to sleep in today as he went off to make last minute preparations at the hall. I guess he felt I deserved a rest. After I felt I had gotten enough sleep in, I hopped myself out of bed and eagerly got dressed and brushed my teeth.

\_This is it! The big night! Oh I hope I don't make a fool out of myself in front of her. Please let this night go well. \_

After I finished up inside, I ran out the door and was met by Toothless who seemed to have jumped from nowhere and land on top of me, pushing me to the ground as he proceeded to lick my face. I appreciated that he was showing how much he cares for me, but I could also tell that my dad decided to give him a couple fish for breakfast. I don't mind the smell of fish, but having to smell it erupting from the belly of a Night Fury would be enough to gross out either Tuffnut or Ruffnut.

"OW! Hey, morning bud," I say as I try to ease him off me. He jumps off and helps me lift myself to my feet. "Thanks. Well I can tell that you're certainly excited for tonight. Follow me, we have to make you look presentable for the festival." I walked down the stairs and into town, Toothless followed. As we're walking towards Gobber's shop to help clean Toothless, we pass by Astrid's house. I'm still a



little nervous that tonight won't go as well as I'm hoping. I keep thinking that I'll somehow screw up and make myself appear idiotic and foolish in front of her. Oh Gods why do I panic when I'm around other people?

I take a deep breath and calm myself down.

I can't keep thinking like this. Just focus on the positive side of things for once in your life. Like how I've created a world where dragons and Vikings live in peace, how I've gotten more friends and am not a social outcast, like how Astrid said yes to my offer to go to the festival. Gods, I still can't believe she said yes to me. She is the most amazing, beautiful girl I've ever met. For tonight, she doesn't even have to dress herself in some fancy ball gown or wear make-up to make herself look more appealing. To me, anything she wears will be fine, just as long as she's there. We don't need all of those lanterns hanging from the ceiling; her smile is enough to brighten up the entire room. Tonight, I don't plan on being a hiccup. I will be confident and assertive. After all, she's worth it.

Toothless and I walked through town, making our way to Gobber's shop. Multiple villagers greeted us and they each told me that they would see me and Toothless at the festival tonight. We finally got to the old blacksmith shop and saw Gobber cleaning up the place. "Ah, Hiccup, fine mornin' isn't it?" "Absolutely Gobber. Say, would you want to help me make Toothless look more, uh, presentable for tonight? He hasn't had a thorough cleaning in a while now." Gobber looked over at Toothless as if studying him. His hairy face lit up, "Of course I will help Hiccup. Bring him over here," he gestured to the far end of the shop where there's a rope hanging from the ceiling that keeps a dragons mouth open as he gives their teeth a brush.

I guided Toothless over to the station and looped the rope under the top of his mouth so it will stay open. I chuckle a little as I realize that Gobber is going to brush the teeth of a dragon whose name is Toothless. Irony isn't it? His mouth was now agape and Gobber walked over with a brush and cleaning supplies. He reached in the mouth and proceeded to give the dragon a cleaning. I could hear him talking and mumbling to himself as he cleaned out his mouth. I think I heard a comment about Toothless having eaten fish before we got here. "So," he began, "tonight's the big night." I smiled.

"Yes, it sure is." After I said that, I looked over to Astrid's house again. "Good luck to ya, Lad." I looked over to him, confused. "Uh, good luck with what?" He continued to brush Toothless' teeth and talk to me at the same time. "With Astrid tonight. I know you've been looking forward to this night with her for a while now. I'm hoping that tonight will go well for you, that's all." He leaned back into the dragon's mouth and continued to scrub. "Thank you."

The two of us spent the next forty five minutes scrubbing Toothless' body all over with water and soap, cleaning off any dirt, or the occasional dead bug. We were finally finished and we each took a step back to marvel in the dragons' beauty. His slick black skin now reflected in the sunlight, almost forcing me to cover my eyes with my hands. He stood proudly as Gobber and I looked at him. "You look great bud." He let out a snort of appreciation. At least, I hope it was appreciation. I walked over to him. "What do you think bud? You ready to go back home?" He looked at me anxiously. "Thanks again

Gobber. He looks better than ever." "Any time. Now go on, I'm sure you have a lot to look after today with the festival and all. I'll see you two there tonight." The ex-blacksmith walked back into his shop. "I'll see you too, Gob."

I decided to meet up with my dad over at the hall to see if he needed any more help for tonight. I had Toothless wait back home so he didn't accidentally break anything as the workers were building something important. I walked through the gate and saw how nice the place looked. It was just like how it looked for Snoggletog, except more formal. The decorations were hung with care, lanterns that will soon be lit hovered over our heads, and on the right side of the hall was a clearing from the other tables that would serve as the dance floor. I could tell it's going to be the dance floor because piled up against the wall was a variety of musical instruments. The instruments included a fiddle, some drums, a guitar and even a violin. I've always wondered what the biggest difference was between a violin and a fiddle. I walked through the hall and found my dad talking and laughing with some of the other villagers. I walked over to them and my dad noticed me. "Good morning son!" "Hey dad. I just came over to see if you guys needed any more help setting up for tonight." My dad scratched his beard and looked around, trying to see if there was anything else that needed to be done. "Uh, nope. It doesn't look like it. We've got it under control. I appreciate you came up to offer though." I sighed, a little disappointed but also relieved that he didn't need my help. "Ok then, I'll see you back at the house." Dad waved to me as I walked out the door.

The festival doesn't start until about six tonight and ends only when the last person leaves, so I have a lot of time before then. I walk back to the house and I bring Toothless over to the training arena for some target practice. He's already an expert on aiming, but I have nothing to do for right now. "You ready bud?" He lets out a grunt. I'm standing on the left side and he is on the right, I'm holding three Frisbees in my hands. I toss them all in the air at once and he shoots each of them down with a tiny fireball with great precision. We do this for about an hour and I decide to go back home. "Great job bud, I'm proud of you."

On the fly back to the village, we took the scenic route because we still had a lot of time to kill. As mentioned before, flying over Berk never gets tiring. If I had to, I could stay up here with Toothless all day long. We flew for a few more hours until I had Toothless fly back home. I jumped off of Toothless and made my way back into the house and ran into my room to take a nap until it's time for the festival. I crawled upstairs and Toothless followed me. I got to the top and Toothless jumped onto his stone slab, lit it on fire and lay down, just like he always does.

As I'm walking to my bed, I notice the suit that my dad had laid down on my bed for me to wear for tonight. It was a white tunic with a flawlessly black suit and a rose over the left pectoral. I lift up the suit by the hanger and hang it on the door. I jumped into bed and closed my eyes.

"Wake up, son. It's time to go." My eyes flew open and I saw my dad standing over the bed. I sat up and stretched, feeling rejuvenated and refreshed and ready for the night. "What time is it?" I yawned. "It is five o'clock." I blinked. "Wait, I thought the festival starts at six?" "As chief, and you being my son, it is our duty to be there

before the guests arrive to greet them as they walk in." I sighed and looked over at Toothless, he was paying attention to our conversation. "So get up, get dressed, and we'll be on our way." He then walked out of my room.

I got up, got dressed in that suit that was hanging on my door, and took a look in my mirror.

\_Hmm, not bad. Not bad at all.\_

I had to admit, just wearing this suit made me feel fancy. I feel as though I am obligated to start walking with my chest puffed out and start drinking my beverages with a pinky sticking up in the air. "Well," I look over to Toothless, "how do I look?" I rotated my body so he could get a good look at me. He 'smiled' and gave me an approving nod. "Hey, at least we're matching," I joked. "Come on, let's go to the hall."

Wow, even Dad looked fancy. He wore a ceremonial green robe and a similar white tunic and wore the same brown fur cape he always wears. His hair was even \_combed. \_COMBED! I've never seen him do anything like that to himself before. "You ready son?" He asked me as we walked up the steps to the hall with Toothless following us. "Sure am, dad." The three of us walked into the hall where we saw many other people who are helping throw the festival making final preparations: Gobber was helping the cook with the fish, the musicians were in the corner tuning their instruments, and Mr. Jorgenson was delivering pitchers of ice water to each and every table. Toothless crawled beneath my arm and made me pet him. Tonight is going to be a memorable one.

The sun was starting to set and nighttime was starting to spill in as dad and I were standing outside the door as the villagers began to pour in. Dad was standing to my right and Toothless was sitting at my left as we greeted each Viking with a handshake or kiss on the cheeks. "Welcome. It's good to see you. I'm glad you could make it. I hope you enjoy yourself." My dad and I were saying this over and over again as we shook the hands of our fellow Vikings and the children were allowed to pet Toothless. I found it odd that Toothless was the only dragon allowed at the festival while everyone else's dragons had to stay home. I guess it's because that Toothless was the first dragon to be trained and acted as a symbol of hope to the villagers. Still, I found it unfair that they couldn't bring their dragons with them. But they didn't seem to mind the slightest bit, so the guilt drowned away. Luckily, Mildew was nowhere to be seen. I didn't want his sour attitude ruining tonight anyways.

"What's up Hic-ster?" Snotlout was walking past me. 'Hic-ster', that's a new one. Annoyingly unoriginal but tonight is supposed to be a fun night, so I let it slide. Coming up next were Fishlegs and then the twins. They greeted me with high fives and several slaps on the back that I easily could have gone without. But, again, it's a fun night.

\_Where is she? I haven't seen her yet.\_

Finally, the line ended and my dad allowed us to go in. the festival hasn't even officially started yet but people were laughing and talking and drinking and over all just having a good time. Children were running around screaming and yelling as they played with one

another. I walked around and was smiling happily but also looking for Astrid. I didn't see her walk in while I was greeting with the other villagers, I'm wondering if she managed to sneak in without me noticing. As I'm walking, Fishlegs diverted my attention as he invited me to sit at the table with him, Ruffnut, Tuffnut and Snotlout. I accepted and sat down next to him and began to talk as Snotlout was bragging about himself in front of the twins, Ruffnut in particular (Ok, that's disgusting). Fishlegs barely ever gave me a chance to speak. He keeps going on and on about the dragons he reads about in the dragon manual. I already know pretty much everything about the dragons, but he is a nice guy and seems to be having a great time. I let him continue his ramblings.

"Everyone! If I could have your attention?" My dad was standing in the front of the hall, standing behind a podium with Toothless by his side. The hall's sound began to die down and the villagers directed their attention to my dad. "Thank you. And thank you for meeting here tonight. For today, we celebrate the 312th year anniversary of our ancestors moving onto Berk!" This got a massive cheer from the crowd. They raised their mugs and gave a whoop. My dad had to settle them down again. "We are thankful for what we have, we mourn for what we've lost, and we hope for a brighter tomorrow. And the journey I have had as your chief has been a wonderful experience. Being around those who are willing to give their time to help others is a tremendous blessing, and I would like to say thank you." "You're welcome!" Shouted out Gobber from the middle of the audience, creating a massive wave of laughter spill through the building. My dad even let out a chuckle.

"Although we have celebrated this event every year, this one is certainly a special one. This is the first time we celebrate with our old enemies, the dragons." He gestured to Toothless who was sitting proudly. "And we have someone very special to thank for showing us our wrong ways in killing them, and showing us that a better life could be achieved by living with them," he was starting to choke up. "Everyone, please give a hand for my wonderful son, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III." The entire building erupted into a massive cheer. Fishlegs patted me on the back and the twins and Snotlout gave me thumbs up. I stood up from my seat and nervously waved back to everyone cheering for me. The cheers died down and I sat back down next to my friends. "Now, as a community, we have had yet another successful year, and I have many people to thank for this, first off, Gobber. My old friend, you have been there for me through thick and thin, through good and bad, you have always been there for me whenever I needed you. I thank you old friend." Gobber gave the chief thumbs up.

My dad continued his speech as my attention was drawn to something else, a voice from behind me. "Ahem." My heart skipped a beat. I looked behind me to see Astrid. My Gods is she beautiful. She wore a white silky ball gown and her hair was braided with a sunflower was resting on her head. My face must have the stupidest expression a man could ever wear because she let out a little giggle. I snapped out of the trance and stood up next to her. Without thinking of anything better to say, I simply said "Hey." "Hey you. Mind if I sit here with you guys?" She gestured to the table we were sitting at. "Hm? OH! Sure, yeah. Of course, go ahead." \_Stop stuttering you moron! \_She sat down and I sat down next to her.

My dad continued his speech, but I wasn't paying attention. I was

simply, and stupidly looking at Astrid. She's so beautiful. Why would she ever want to go out with a guy like me? I must have dozed off for a while because my dad finally finished his speech and declared the festival shall begin.

The food was delicious. Chefs came out and delivered fish, meat, fruit, vegetables and pretty much anything else we wanted. It wasn't until the smell of the food wafted into my nose that I realized how hungry I was. I was about to dig in but I told myself not to fully pig out because of Astrid sitting right next to me. I took my time eating and sipping my water as she struck up a conversation with Fishlegs. I decided to join in and we began to talk about recent classes we've had and talked about what subject we should focus on next. Whether it is more about the history of dragons, self-defense against a wild dragon, or precise aiming. Even talking about this was nice. Talking about what our interests are and our fun adventures together, this truly is a nice night. While we were on the subject of dragons, I accidentally mentioned my encounter with the Whispering Death alone in the cove. They at first were worried and asked if I was ok. I assured them I was and told Fishlegs I even got a decent drawing of it in my notebook. He got excited and I promised to show it to him later tonight.

We ate and talked for about an hour. Then, we heard music. The band began playing traditional island music and people began to swarm the dance floor. I had to say, it was a catchy song. I sat there, tapping my foot to the beat, and then I looked at Astrid. I got up, looked down to her and offered her my hand. "Astrid, would you do me the honor of joining me in the dance?" She looked at me and blushed. She accepted my hand and we walked to the dance floor where almost all the Vikings were dancing themselves silly. The two of us then began to dance on our own. We looked at each other and smiled as we moved our bodies to the rhythm of the music. I never was much of a dancer; I never really was good at it, especially with my fake leg not wanting to cooperate with me. But Astrid didn't seem to mind. The band continued to play upbeat and happy music that we moved our bodies fast to. Then, for the next song, they slowed it down. The beat was slow and calm and all the Viking couples joined together and slowly moved to the soothing tune. Astrid came up to me, smiling, and wrapped her arms around my neck. My heart beat faster, then I finally wrapped my arms around her waist and we danced together.

My feet moved to the music surprisingly well. I did my best to not trip over myself or to step on her feet. I was impressed on how well I was doing. She was staring into my eyes. I stared back. "Astrid, you look very nice today." "Thank you Hiccup. You look very handsome." I blushed. "Oh," she started, "and I'm sorry I'm late. I had to settle down Stormfly before I left. She was so restless for some reason." "Oh, that's no problem. I knew you would come." We continued to dance and hold each other. "Hiccup, I want to say something." Oh Gods.

"Yes?" "Well, I, uh. Gosh, I don't know how to put it." I was a little worried. "It's ok Astrid. You can tell me anything." She looked up at me hopefully. "Well, I have feelings for you Hiccup." My eyes widened. "What kind of feelings? Good? Bad? In between?" "No, no they are very good feelings," she reassured. "I like you Hiccup, as in more than just a friend. You are so good and kind to everyone, and I've been blind as to not have seen it." I didn't know how to react. So I asked "You like me Astrid?" She looked back into my eyes. "Yes.

And I'm sorry for the horrible way I've treated you before. I just didn't get the chance to-" This time, I kissed her.

She was surprised at first, and then she gave in to it and returned the kiss to me. She cradled my face with her hands and leaned her head in to deepen the kiss. After about ten seconds we released each other. "I like you too." She smiled and rested her head to my chest. We continued to slowly dance for the remainder of the song. Sure I never really made a great dancer, but I didn't want this song to end. Unfortunately it did. The man playing the fiddle announced to the dancers that they will be taking a break but will be back shortly. Astrid lifted her head so she could look into my eyes. After a few seconds of just staring at each other, I heard Fishlegs come running up behind me. "Hey Fishlegs, what's up? Having fun?" He was out of breath. "I'm having a great time Hiccup, but ever since you said you got an accurate drawing of the Whispering Death, I justâ€¦ Ohhh, can I see it please? Do you have your notebook on you?" I laughed a little. "Of course you can look at it Fish-" I reached for my coat pocket, but realized my notebook wasn't there. It must still be in my other clothes back at the house.

\_Wait, when I saw the Whispering Death move, Iâ€¦ Oh Gods. I dropped it! It's still at the cove!\_

I stuttered a little. "Oh, shoot. It's in my pocket in my vest back at the house. Let me just go and get it." I looked at Astrid apologetically. "I'm sorry Astrid. I'll be back as soon as I can." She kissed me again. "It's ok. Go on." Fishlegs looked at the two of us in awe. "Oh Thor, you two are going out now?" We held each other's hand with a smile on our faces, and then I nodded. He was ecstatic. "That's fantastic! Oh, and please hurry up with the book Hiccup, I really want to see it!" "I will. I'll be back soon." I walked away and made my way to the door, making sure Toothless wasn't following me. He needed to stay. Then I saw him entertaining the children with his tiny fireballs. \_That's my boy.\_

I walked out of the hall unnoticed and made my way to the forest. Sure it's dark outside, but I know these woods like the back of my hand.

It took a while, but I finally made it to the cove. I climbed down and tried to avoid the holes the Whispering Death created. Luckily, the notebook was still there. I ran over and picked it up. Now I have to get back and come up with some sort of explanation as to why it took so long to get the notebook from my house so Astrid won't worry. With the notebook in my hands, I proceed to walk back to the hall in high spirits. Tonight is going so well: Astrid and I are dating now, Toothless is being accepted into the Viking family, my dad is proud of me, it's just a perfect-

\_Snap\_

I hear the sound of a twig being stepped on and I instantly dive for cover behind a bush. I hope the rustling sound it makes doesn't attract too much attention from whatever is following me. Wait, I hear voices. They're a little muffled but I can make them out.

"How long do we have to wait here?"

"Just a little longer, the others are on their way." Others? Who are

these guys? Who are they talking about?

"I'm sick of all this waiting! Can't we just snatch up the dragons now?" What?!

"No, not until Alvin gets here! Be patient." Alvin?! Oh Gods, oh Gods this is not good. I cover my mouth to try to not make any sounds.

"Gods, how do we even know that crotchety old man is telling the truth anyways? What's his name again? Milton?"

"Mildew," the other man corrected.

WHAT?! I let out a muffled squeal.

"Did you hear something?" "It's just the wind. Come on, the other Outcasts should be arriving by now."

They walk out of earshot. I climb out of the bush, trying to piece together what I just heard. Apparently, Mildew made a deal with Alvin and the Outcasts to steal our dragons. I knew this man hated our dragons, but this? This is just pure evil!

I have to warn the others at the hall: but first, I have a certain village elder to talk toâ€¦

## 12. Mildew's Confession

I walk through the dense forest floor for a good half hour before I reach the front lawn of Mildew's house. He lives alone on a hill with his pet sheep Fungus. I'm glad he lives so far away from the rest of us, I don't want his crankiness or bad attitude anywhere near Toothless or the other dragons.

From what I'm able to gather, this traitor actually made a deal with Alvin so that he could steal the dragons under our very noses. I swear to Odin himself that Mildew will be banished from this island once this is all sorted through!

Before I walk to the front step I looked up and smiled as I saw the old statue of Thor the others and me had built to help ward off the increasing lightning storms Berk has had. The gang and I dropped this little souvenir off at his house just to bug him. And on most occasions, it did.

Those events happened a few months ago and the statue is beginning to rust around the joints, good. I hope this thing falls on top of his house. The look on his face will be priceless.

I stepped onto the front step and angrily knocked on the door. No answer. I knocked again, harder and faster and longer. No answer. I do however hear some muffled noises that turned out to be Fungus walking around the house, making sheep noises.

Growing impatient of the old man, I twist the doorknob and find that the door has been left unlocked. I walk inside and do indeed find Fungus innocently walking around the living room chewing up Mildew's furniture. \_Good Fungus.\_

Mildew must have had a fire burning earlier tonight because his fireplace was still warm and had red-hot glowing embers resting inside of it. I look around the living room and see no sign of Mildew anywhere.

I walk up his stairs and into his bedroom where I find him silently sleeping. I watched as his chest rises and falls under his blankets. I glare at the old man. Shocked and appalled by his betrayal. I knew he hated our dragons, but I never EVER would have thought he would go to a length such as this to get rid of them.

Not caring whether I woke him or not, I stomped over to his bedside. My fists are clenched and my breathing is heavy. I rose my foot and kicked his bed, making it rattle and clunk around. He shifted uncomfortably and slightly opened his eyes. "WAKE UP!" I shouted at the top of my lungs and almost felt a scratch in my throat.

The old man shrieked and jumped out of his bed, arms wailing in all directions as he fell to the wooden floor. He jumped to his feet in a panicked frenzy. "What the? Whose doin' that? Fungus what have you done?! We're under attack! I-" he stopped once he laid his eyes on me.

He then made the angriest face I have ever seen him make. "Why you little. What'd ya think you're doing in my house at this hour? I'll have you reported for such rash behavior!"

Before he could ramble on anymore, I stared at him coldly and asked him one question. "What have you done?" He blankly stared at me. "Eh? I have no clue as to what you're referring to." "Don't you even dare think about playing stupid with me," I said pointing my finger at him and backing him towards the wall. "I'm going to ask one more time." I inhaled deeply. "What. Have. You. Done?" He looked worried, which was fine by me. "You're going to have to be more specific than that." He is starting to make me sick.

"Mildew, I was in the woods. I SAW two Outcast soldiers and they said that they are going to take the dragons. They mentioned your name. You sold out our dragons!"

He began to stutter, trying to think up of a perfectly logical explanation for this whole ordeal. When he came up with nothing good to say, he sighed. "You fools left me no choice."

Anger boiled up inside me. I wanted to strike this man as hard as I could with my fake leg.

"You refused to accept the inevitability of the dragons turning against us once again. So, I did the next best thing. Someday, the village will thank me for this."

"Thank you? Mildew, they will HATE you for this! You will be forever branded as a traitor and casted off the island for this!" The more I talked, the angrier and louder I became, each threat, each warning seeming to have no effect on the old man whatsoever.

"You're young, Hiccup. One day, you'll too understand the dangers of these wild beasts. And so will the island. We'll soon be back to our old ways, don't you worry."



He didn't want me to worry? If things went back to the way they originally were, we'd be slaughtering these creatures and they'd be killing us again! Not only that, but I might be the town nerd and weakling once more.

The two of us argued back and forth. Me noting every good thing the dragons have done for us while he only mentions the worst things they have done. Each which, incidentally, took place before I managed to train them.

"I honestly don't see what you're so upset about Hiccup. You yourself killed the Red Death. I believe you'd make a fine dragon killer." "I had to kill it! It was cruel, ruthless and tormented the other dragons. Besides, I had Toothless help me take it down! He helped save this village! And you are too blinded to see it. My dad is going to know about this Mildew," I warned. "And once he knows, he will personally-"

The sound of shouts and the squeaking of metal wheels cut my thought short.

I looked to the open doorway. "Oh no." I ran out the bedroom, leaving Mildew alone, and ran down the stairs and out the front door, passed the statue of Thor and to the railings that prevented me from plummeting down the massive Cliffside that he precariously lived on.

I grabbed onto the railings and leaned over to get a better look. From the dense forest, adjacent to our village, ran dozens upon dozens of Outcast warriors.

They each spilled out of the woods, some holding weapons, and others dragging very large wagons with cages on top of them. I looked to the Hall and could hear the upbeat music and dancing and laughing emanating from it. The sound of the celebration would mask the sounds of the Outcasts rummaging through our households, getting their hands on our dragons.

I looked around the group of Outcasts to see if I could spot Alvin, but it was too dark outside and they were too far away for me to tell.

In hindsight, I probably should have gone to warn my dad and the others firstâ€¦

Way to prioritize there, Hiccup.

"It's too late now. They're already here." I turned behind me to see that Mildew followed me outside, now clutching onto his walking stick. "Call them off Mildew. Right now!"

"Oh, I'd love to, but I'm just a wee old man. They'd never listen to me," he teased.

I turned away from him and looked back down to the village. The Outcasts were breaking into our houses and snatching up every dragon they could find. They ran to the specially designed stalls and grabbed each Deadly Nadder, each Zippleback, and each Monstrous Nightmare by their throats and brought them to the center of town

where they were muzzled and thrown into the variously sized cages.

I couldn't believe what I was witnessing.

"You've lost, Hiccup." Mildew was standing directly behind me now. I could feel his warm breath spreading across my shoulder.

My heart felt like it stopped once I saw that the Outcasts were successfully able to cage Stormfly, Barf and Belch and Hookfang. Some of the most vicious dragons I knew were now at the mercy of these horrible men.

But what made my blood run cold was the sight of five Outcasts walking to the entrance of the Great Hall. The one in the lead position I instantly recognized.

Alvin.

Knowing about the festival, knowing the Vikings will be defenseless on this night, he is going to raid the building and he will strike at the one thing that he knows will get my attention.

Toothless.

He and the other Outcasts flood into the Hall.

"No!" I turn away from the railing and start to run to the stairs. But before I made it, Mildew swung his walking stick at my feet; sweeping them from under me and making me collapse onto the cold ground.

I'm dazed at first but I soon get a hold of myself as I see Mildew jump towards me, raising his walking stick in the air with the intent of jabbing me in the throat with the end of it.

My eyes widen and I roll to the right, avoiding the end of the walking stick as it drove itself into the ground. As I got back up, Mildew swung his stick at me again and hits me right in my face.

My nose and cheeks roar with pain and I back up after the impact. I keep backing up until my back hits the base of the statue looming over us. My hands grip my nose for a while, and then I see Mildew running to me again with his stick raised high.

Man, for an old man he sure moves fast.

This time I duck and step to the right as the walking stick hits harmlessly against the base of the statue. However, the impact from hitting the statue with such force sent vibrations through his body.

He was distracted.

I took advantage of this and delivered a kick to his side. The elderly man fell to the ground with a loud thud.

Not wanting to waste anymore time, I turned around and tried to make my way to the stairs again. But something white, fuzzy and only up to my knees in height tripped me.

Fungus!

I fell over the sheep and landed face first into the grass.

"Nice work, Fungus!" Mildew quickly got to his feet, wrapped the walking stick around my throat and pulled me backwards.

The circulation in my neck was instantly cut off as my body was pulled from the ground and being massively strangled by Mildew. "Time to finish this nonsense once and for all!"

I was up on my feet now and my back was pushed against Mildew's body as he used his massive walking stick to strangle the life out of me. I tried to wiggle my body and struggle against his surprisingly iron grip, but it was no use.

I reached my hand out, trying to clutch onto the air as if that would save me. I'm choking and coughing uncontrollably. Black smudges and dots dance around in my eyesight due to the lack of any oxygen.

\_Dad.\_

\_Toothless.\_

\_Astrid.\_

\_I'm so sorry.\_

As my body was about to black out into oblivion, the earth shook and Mildew loosened his grip on the stick, allowing air to enter my lungs again.

"What the devil?" Mildew looked befuddled. He looked around to find the cause of the trembling. I immediately knew what the cause of it was.

The trembling came back, for a longer period of time and even more violently. Thor's statue shook uncontrollably right above us.

Then ten feet in front of us, the Whispering Death erupted from the earth. First its eyes were locked on me, then it looked to the village.

"MY Gods! It's the beast!" Cried Mildew. The Whispering Death paid no attention to him, instead focusing on the village and the carnage below.

The dragon swooped downward into the earth, digging its way to the village. I'm not sure what its intent is this time. To either help the Outcasts or to just cause as much destruction as possible.

\_C'mon man! I thought we were cool!\_

"Well, now that he's gone!" Mildew pulled the stick into my throat once again.

Not a moment after he did so, we both heard a loud creaking and moaning sound come from right above us. He loosened his grip again and we both looked up.

The weakened statue of Thor began to ominously moan. As if the structure itself was weakening. Rust fell from the hand that held aloft his hammer Mjolnir and landed on our heads. I could see it starting to fall from his hand.

\_Oh no.\_

I pulled the walking stick from my throat, jumped forward and rolled out of the way just as the mighty Mjolnir slipped from the statue's hand and plummeted down to Mildew.

"GAAAAH!" Mildew held his hands over his head as to soften the blow, but it was no good. The hammer slammed on top of his frail, old body and he was crushed.

His lifeless arm still grasping the walking stick he used to try to kill me was protruding from under the hammer and lying on the side. I watched in horror.

"Holy Gods," were the only words I could make out. I stood up on shaky legs, somehow unable to accept what I just saw.

The scream of a fellow Viking snapped me back into reality. I looked over the railing and saw the Outcasts have Toothless in their arms and walking him to a cage in the shape of a rectangular prism.

I turn and see Fungus sniffing the lifeless hand.

I turned and ran down the stairs.

\_Don't worry Toothless. I'm coming!\_

### 13. Retaliation

I ran as fast as I possibly could. I reached the bottom of Mildew's large flight of stairs, ran into the edge of the forest for cover and jumped into a bush. My suit becoming torn and tattered by twigs as I do so. I don't care about that, after all, I did get it insanely dirty after my scuffle with Mildew.

His crumpled and crushed body flashes through my mind, Fungus, not showing any emotion (as usual) sniffing his cold dead arm. I shake the horrible image from my head and try to think of a plan.

Thinkingâ€¦|

Thinkingâ€¦|

Thinkingâ€¦|

Nothing! I can't come up with anything! I can't handle this much pressure!

The Outcasts were starting to lead the frightened villagers out of the Great Hall and down to the village square with their hands behind their heads at crossbow point and with swords and spears.

I see my dad walking next to Gobber. I know my dad won't try to do anything to take them out, not if there's a chance that one of our own could be wounded or killed. He wouldn't risk it.

After the Whispering Death exploded from the ground in Mildew's front lawn, it started to dig its way to the village. But I don't see it anywhere. It must be going off someplace else. Which is honestly fine by me. I can't deal with that thing while I'm trying to save my village.

In the front of the crowd, I saw Snotlout, Fishlegs, Ruffnut and Tuffnut walking side by side with their hands too behind their heads. But I saw no sign of Astrid. I swear to the Gods that if they do anything to her that will be the last thing they ever do!

They have successfully caged all of our dragons. They were in iron-bar cages looking scared and hopeless. They were all scattered in the village square along with the villagers. I could see Thornado with a muzzle over his massive mouth preventing him from destroying the cage with a shockwave. The Terrible Terrors were all shoved into a wooden crate. Once the lid closed, the box began to shake and wobble, but the tiny dragons are not strong enough to bust through.

And Toothless. The other guards had to put all their strength into it, but they got him muzzled and locked up in a large rectangular cage. He squirmed and wiggled inside, pushing against the door, but he isn't strong enough.

As I watch the madness unfold before me, five horse drawn wagons came out of the forest and circled around the dragons. Each wagon was specifically built and structured so it could hold many cages.

While some Outcasts stood by the frightened Vikings and made sure they didn't try to do anything brave, the others began lifting and loading the dragons onto the wagon beds.

I've got to stop them before all of our dragons are loaded on them!

I'm still thinking of a plan, but I am shaking uncontrollably at the thought of losing my best friend. I'm also still scanning the crowd for Astrid. I still am unable to find her. Please let her be all right!

As my head is spinning as I hide behind this bush, I hear two figures come up behind me. I quickly turn and see two Vikings, each with a hook over where their right hand should be. One had a brown beard, the other had a blond one and has a bucket stuck on his head.

"Mulch! Bucket!"

"Hiccup, what in the name of Odin is going on here?" Asked a very concerned Mulch.

"Get down!" I quickly stand up, grab their shoulders and pulled them down so they are lying in the bush with me out of sight from the Outcasts.

"What are you guys doing?" I whisper. "You weren't at the festival?" Mulch began to speak. "Well, I was about to say that we go celebrate with the rest of you, but Bucket here INSISTED that we go fishing instead." I shushed him after he put way too much emphasis on 'insisted'.

"I can't help it. I just love to pet the li'l fishies when they swim next to the boat," replied the always oblivious but well-intentioned Bucket. "Well, as long as you two are here, I could use your help."

"That was my next question. What is happening?" Mulch looked concerned once he saw the event that was happening right in front of us. "Ok, here's what's happening. Alvin and the Outcasts launched an invasion while the other Vikings were partying so they can steal our dragons."

"Steal our dragons?" Bucket asked a little too loudly. Mulch and I shushed him. "Yes. I need to stop them before they load the cages onto those wagons." I looked at the two of them. "And I could use your guys' help." Their faces lit up once I said that.

"Ok, here's the plan: You two run out of this bush and make some of the guards chase after you. Run into the forest and lead them away from here. Meanwhile, I'll sneak into the blacksmith shop, get supplies, open the cages and we run the Outcasts off of the island with our dragons." They looked at me with their mouths dropped. "Do you understand?" They closed their mouths, gulped and nodded. "Good. Let's do this."

The two of them stood up shakily and walked out of the forest and into the open. "Hey bad guys! Why are you so bad?" Bucket is too nice and gentle to come up with good insults. He never was good at yelling them. Mulch waved his hands in the air and shouted to get their attention. It worked.

Five Outcast soldiers ran toward them with swords at the ready. Mulch and Bucket screamed in unison and ran off into the forest with the five Outcasts in hot pursuit.

\_Way to go guys!\_

That's five less Outcasts I have to deal with now.

I softly lifted my body off of the forest floor, kept myself in a crouched position and tiptoed to the village.

I circled the border of the forest so the Outcasts loading the wagons with our dragons wouldn't notice me. I waited to run until I was directly next to one of the buildings. I looked around to make sure that no soldiers were close by. Once I knew I was clear, I made a run for it.

I successfully made it behind the building. I put my back against the wall and breathed heavily. I actually didn't think I'd make it this far. I looked to my right and I could see Gobber's blacksmith shop is still five buildings away from the one I was currently behind. I crept towards the building as swiftly as I could. I reached the corner of the wall where an alley between this building and the next threatened to give me away.

I carefully peeked over the corner to see if any soldiers could see me. When I saw none, I quickly tucked and rolled into the shadows of the next-door building. I continued this process with the other buildings: creep, peek, and roll. Creep, peek, and roll.

I thanked the Gods that no one saw me and I successfully made it into Gobber's shop. I snuck in through the back door and kept my back slouched and my knees bent so the Outcasts won't see me through the windows. I reach one of the walls and I grab hold of a crowbar so I could free the Terrible Terrors from the crates. I continued to walk like a demented duck over to the drawers where I swiped a screwdriver and some needles so I could pick the locks to the cages. Once I got what I needed, I snuck out the back again.

I silently closed the door and made my way to the far corner of the shop where I saw two crates filled with the Terrible Terrors. I looked around the corner and saw no one close by. I rolled behind the first crate. They must have heard me because the crate began to wobble.

"Guys, don't worry. It's just me." I tried to whisper to them, but it didn't sound like they were listening. I looked over the edge of the crate to see if there were any Outcasts close by. It seemed like they were focusing on loading up the big dragons first. I grabbed the crowbar, aimed it at the top and smashed the tip of it into the tiny crack.

Once I felt that it was in there deep enough, I began to push down on my end, trying to pry open the lid silently. I push and push and push. I can hear the nails in the crate creak and moan as they leave the wooden surface.

"What the?"

My heart skipped a beat. It sounded like an Outcast is walking to me right now! I've got to push harder!

\_C'mon! Open you son of a-\_

The lid of the crate flew open and the tiny dragons flew out in glee. I could hear the Outcasts gasp and shout in surprise as they flew around in the air for a few seconds. Once they were done celebrating freedom, they each dive bombed onto an Outcast and clenched tightly to their bodies, biting and clawing viciously. They started to run and blindly slash the air with their swords trying to cut up the tiny dragons into pieces.

In the midst of the mayhem, I crawled to the second crate, wedged the crowbar into the lid and pushed down until this one too popped open, revealing another wave of tiny angry dragons. That's all of the Terrible Terrors, now I have to free the others.

I carefully walked to the cage that kept Thornado, knowing that he would be able to help clear the island of the Outcasts. I watched as the tiny beasts began mercilessly biting and clawing at the soldiers' faces until they were a bloody mess and started to run away. The Vikings began to cheer them on, not noticing me.

Thornado looked pleased to see me. A gigantic brown belt was wrapped

around his mouth. I'll have to cut that off once I free him. I get out my screwdriver and the needles and did my best to pick the lock. From behind me, I heard one of the Outcasts yell, "It's the Dragon Conqueror!"

I looked behind me and saw two Outcast soldiers running towards me with their swords raised. The needles fumbled around in my hand as I tried to pick the lock. Miraculously, the cage door opened and the Thunderdrum walked up to greet me. I unsheathed my knife and cut off the belt over his mouth.

He opened his large gaping mouth and let out a large shockwave/roar that propelled the two soldiers backwards through the air. I patted his head. "Great job." The two soldiers hit the ground hard and the others looked back to see where they had come from. Everyone's eyes were directed to me. "It's him!" The Outcast soldiers that aren't being chewed up by the Terrible Terrors charged to me. Thornado took flight and blasted a large number of them backwards, but there were still many left, and they are coming right for me!

With no time to pick the other locks, I climbed on top of Thornado's cage. I looked to my left and saw a cage that contained Meatlug. Her cage was stacked on top of Stormfly's and Hookfang's. The Outcasts began to climb up on this cage and I made a leap over to Meatlug.

I grabbed hold of the bars and climbed to the top where I got to my feet. I looked down and saw that I was a good twenty-five to thirty feet in the air.

I grabbed hold of the crowbar that I shoved into my belt to arm myself. The other Outcasts are climbing up to me now. I stepped over the edge and swung the crowbar down at their heads. Their helmets flew off as they lost their grip and fell to the ground with a violent thud.

More and more Outcasts are climbing up to me. I simply connected my crowbar with their heads and they plummeted to the earth. One Outcast managed to climb up and walk over to me. I kicked my boot into his chest and sent him sprawling to the ground with the others.

I step close to the edge again and continue to knock off every Outcast I saw. As I continued to do so, I saw the other Vikings began to fight back too. The village square erupted into a massive battle that consisted of swords clanking against each other and fists pounding at each other's faces. Even from this height I couldn't find Astrid!

I swatted off the last Outcast and he harshly fell to the ground. Adrenaline continued to pulse through my veins. My victory was short lived as I felt a large hand wrap around my ankle. I pull my foot away in panic and almost fall off the tower of cages. The man who nearly sent me to the hard earth floor pulled himself up and stood right across from me. Savage.

He glared at me. "You've given us a lot of trouble Dragon Conqueror. It's time you pay for this." I looked at him in surprise. "Wait, doesn't Alvin need me alive? I'm the one he needs in order for him to control dragons." As I talked, the massive battle in the square continued. "He doesn't need you when he has the book." "Uh, Earth to Savage? He's already tried the book. It didn't work for him."



Remember?"

"There's been a change in plans. When he has the book, he can learn to train the monsters on his own. And that pretty blond girl is leading him right to it."

\_Astrid!\_

"He has no use for you anymore." As he finished his sentence, he drew his sword and lunged at me. I stepped to the right and let the sword hit harmlessly against the bars of the cage. I drew my crowbar over my head and tried to bring it down on top of Savage. He lifted his sword up and blocked my attack.

Back and forth we fought. Sword vs. Crowbar. The metal clanking against each other as we lunged and blocked. I had to be careful though, every few steps we took my prosthetic foot almost slid inside of the cage, making me lose my balance. I quickly pull myself back together and I'm back to fighting.

As we battle on top of the cages, I see Thornado pushing all of the cages that were loaded on the wagons onto the ground. The dragons inside were a little shaken up but they were fine. The Thunderdrum landed on the earth and roared, scaring off the horses as they drag away the wagons.

My limbs are growing tired. Savage is much larger and stronger than me. Each blow he lands on me sends pain roaring through me joints and into my core. Finally, one swing of his blade and he sends my crowbar falling down to the earth thirty feet below us. I hold up my hands defensively and back up. He is holding his sword in a ready position and has a mangled look on his face. He lunges, wraps his free hand around my windpipe and lifts me off my feet. He raises his sword.

I am desperately gasping for air, but none is allowed through my enclosed throat. How many times can a kid be strangled in a single day until he dies?

"Lights out, Dragon Cong-" The earth shook violently, making the cages we are standing on shake. With his fist still clenched around my throat, Savage lost his footing and fell backwards, pulling me to the hard earth floor with him.

He lands on his back; surely the wind is knocked clean from his lungs.

My fall is slightly cushioned as I land on top of his belly and roll onto the ground. We both uneasily stood up and tried to regain our balance but the tremor came back.

\_Oh no. Now things are going to get difficult.\_

The earth erupted in a massive blow and out came the Whispering Death.

The battle between the Vikings and Outcasts seemed to be on pause. Everyone stood still, looking at the dragon that came from the earth. It looked around, as if trying to tell where it is. Its eyes locked on to Savage. It looked at him and how he had a sword gripped in his hand, and it was raised towards me.

The dragons' eyelids narrowed and it let out a snort. Savage, who was frozen in his tracks, looked at the massive dragon.

In the blink of an eye, the Whispering Death whipped its tail and it wrapped around Savage's body.

No wayâ€¦|

With one massive jerk, the dragon swung its tail upwards, sending Savage flying straight up. He screamed and wailed, flailing his arms in every direction as if trying to reach for something to grab onto to prevent his fall, but his hands found nothing but air.

The Whispering Death flew upwards with its mouth open and Savage fell in. The dragon closed its mouth and chewed. Every other time it opened its mouth, I could see Savage's body being ripped to shreds by the six rows of rotating teeth. Blood dripped down the creature's chin and it finally swallowed. Savage was gone forever.

I looked up at the dragon as a variety of emotions flooded through me.

Again, I think I see it nod its head in my direction. It craned its neck around and saw other warriors that were dressed similarly to the one it just ate. It opened its mouth, dove down and found more food to snack on. Not wanting to listen to the Outcasts' cries of agony or watch as their bodies are torn apart, I run for Toothless.

His cage was located at the front step of the Great Hall. I ran up to him, reached my arms through the bars and hugged him, hard. "I'm so sorry, bud. Let's get you out of there." He snorts in agreement.

I reach in my pockets and pull out the two needles, squeeze them in the keyhole in an attempt to unlock this portable prison. After what felt like forever, I heard a click and I swung the door open. The Night Fury joyfully leapt out and stood next to me. I ripped off his muzzle, climbed on his back, and he ran into the town square.

The Whispering Death continued to swoop down through the air and gobble up all the Outcasts in its way, grinding them up in his mouth in a bloody and gore-filled mess, and swallowing. Toothless ran down the steps and fired multiple warning shots at the Outcasts. They all panic and run for the forest.

As they run, the Whispering Death continues to swoop down and pick out the unlucky soldier for a meal. The Outcasts are now running into the forest and back to their boats. Toothless stops running and we turn around to meet the crowd of Vikings. With no more food in sight, the Whispering Death dove into the ground and buried itself again.

I jump off Toothless and run to meet my dad. He opens his arms and embraces me in a huge hug. He laughs triumphantly. "Well done son!" The others begin to crowd around me too. But before I accept congratulations from any of them, I need to do something. "Dad, Alvin has Astrid. He's trying to get his hands on the book of dragons again!"

"I know son. I'll take Thornado and-" "No," I cut him off. "I'm going to save Astrid." He tried to talk me out of it, but I simply won't

take no for an answer. I've taken on Alvin before. He may have muscle, but I've got the brain to counter it.

After I make my stand, he sighs. "Alright. But be careful. This man is dangerous. You go, and we'll take care of things here." I smile at him. "Thanks dad." I run to Toothless and we quickly make a sprint over to our house where I saddle him up.

I hop on and we take off into the sky.

If anything happens to her, I'll never forgive myself.

Hold on Astrid. I'm coming.

#### 14. Facing Alvin

Toothless was flapping his wings as fast as he could. With his black skin and my slightly torn and tattered black suit, we blended perfectly into the night sky, at least I hope we do. I still might have the element of surprise if Alvin thinks that the other Outcasts are loading up the dragons.

Let's see, Savage said that he has Astrid and he is going to make her get the book for him. We lock the Book of Dragons locked up at the training arena every night. That's where they'll be. If I hurry, I might even be able to beat them there.

Alvin is going to pay for doing this, for taking Astrid, for hurting Toothless, for ruining my perfect night! Mildew has already paid for his betrayal with his life. I'm going to have to tell dad that Mjolnir itself crushed him. Honestly, I don't think he'll be missed. He was an angry, cranky, crotchety and flat out annoying old man!

Toothless swept through the air like a bullet. The arena is in my sights. "C'mon, faster bud," I encouraged Toothless. We flew over the bridge that connects the forest to the arena and saw them.

Alvin and Astrid. He is gripping her hair in his giant sausage-like fingers.

\_I swear to Thor, Alvin. If you so much as pull a single hair from her head, I'llâ€¦\_. \_

Uh, I guess I haven't planned that far ahead.

A plan quickly formulated in my noggin. I had Toothless bank sharply to the right and we flew to the south. He flew for about a few hundred yards until I made him quickly do a 180 and we were flying straight to the wooden bridge. It was coming up fast.

"Plasma blast!" I commanded Toothless. The Night Fury opened his mouth and a white and blue ball of flame erupted from it. The fireball hit its target; the mid section of the bridge was blown off, creating a rather large gap between them and the rest of the bridge. Toothless continued to fly forward, turned around and fired another blast at the bridge, creating an even bigger gap than before, preventing them from crossing.

I saw Alvin and Astrid shield their faces as hot pieces of debris flew past them. I even think I heard Alvin yelling in frustration.

That's fantastic.

"Good job bud. Now land." Toothless obeyed and flew to the side of the bridge opposite from Alvin and Astrid and closest to the entrance of the arena. Luckily, after the fireballs damaged the bridge, it was still slightly structurally stable.

Alvin coughed, looked up at me and smiled. "Well, look who's come to ruin the fun. And might I add that you look dashing in that suit." I ignored him and looked to Astrid. "Astrid, are you ok?" She looked worried, but she has every right to be. The most feared enemy known to Berk is holding her by nothing but her hair. "I'm fine Hicc- YOW!" Alvin pulled on her braid sharply. Toothless growled.

I looked over to Alvin. "Al, let her go right now!" He laughed. "Why, how are you going to make me? You are, after all, standing way over there," he pointed to me. He has a point. I did partially destroy the bridge and now I couldn't do anything to him from over here besides shouting out quirky comebacks.

"Well, what are you going to do? Now you can't get the book," I countered. I saw him smile under his grotesquely large beard. "You're right, I can't." He wrapped his arm over Astrid's body, clenched her close to him, drew his sword and held it to her throat. "But you can."

My heart dropped. Not only did I prevent myself from being able to take him on in hand-to-hand combat, but I also left him isolated with the one girl I cared about and now he's going to kill her!

Gods my plan sucks.

I gulped, held up my hands to show him I'm not going to make any sudden stupid moves and walked backwards slowly. "Alvin, please! Don't do this," I pleaded, hoping to reach a single ounce of humanity that could be possibly hidden within all those buff muscles. He grinned and let out a chuckle.

"Come now, Dragon Conqueror. I'm a slightly reasonable man. Here's the deal; you walk in there, grab the book and throw it over to me, and I'll let your girlfriend here go, and I'll never come to this island again." He's lying of course. Once he has the book, he'll train his own fleet of dragons and will stop at nothing until Berk is destroyed.

"You might as well do it. Savage and the others will be back to the boats any minute now with your drag-" "Savage is dead and your army has retreated," I informed him with a smirk on my face. This information seemed to come as a surprise to both him and Astrid. They both had surprised expressions on their faces. "You- you killed Savage?" I didn't answer his question.

"Alvin! Your army is gone! It's over. There's nothing left to fight for! Just give up and go back to Outcast Island!" I felt silly trying to reason with the leader of the Outcasts, but my wit is the only weapon I have at the moment.

He loosened his grip on Astrid, still a little dumbfounded by the news that his second in command is now dead. He narrowed his eyes, re-tightened his grip on her and aimed the tip of his sword at me. "I don't need Savage! I can take the book myself!" After he roared that out, he threw Astrid behind him and she landed on the bridge with a hard thud. He ran at full speed to the gap and jumped.

I started to panic, he's jumping over to me! "Toothless, fire!" Toothless shot out another fireball that hit Alvin square in the chest. He flew backwards and landed back on the other side of the bridge and slid back a few feet away from Astrid who just jumped to her feet to avoid him skidding into her.

\_Now's my chance!\_

I jumped on Toothless and he shot forward across the gap and landed on the other side. "Hurry!" I called over to Astrid. She ran over to us, jumped on Toothless' back right behind me and wrapped her hands around my waist. Alvin, dazed from the blast, stood up and glared at the three of us. He lunged.

"Up Toothless! Up!" Toothless jumped and flew vertically into the air. After a second of flight, he let out a yelp and we lost altitude. He struggled to keep himself balance and tried to rise higher into the air. I looked back and saw the problem; Alvin jumped and grabbed a hold onto Toothless' tail. He rose into the air with us and Toothless struggled to keep us airborne.

He flapped and flapped and flapped as fast and hard as he could, but Alvin was still dragging us down. Alvin held on with a ferocious iron grip as he was dangling from the tail like a ragdoll.

"There!" I heard Astrid shout into my ear over the sound of the roaring wind. She was pointing to the treetops in the forest. I instantly knew what she was thinking. "Toothless!" He looked at me and I pointed to the forest. He understood immediately and flew until we were just barely grazing the top of the trees.

I heard Alvin curse repeatedly as his body was dragged through leaves, pines and twigs, but he still won't let go. Toothless flew until the forest ended and Alvin was once again suspended into open air, refusing to let go. I could feel Toothless breathing hard as he climbed higher into the sky.

I felt Astrid let go of my waist and she turned herself around and faced Alvin. "What are you doing?" I asked. She looked over at me and said, "Trying to knock him off!" She scooted herself until she reached the tail and shimmied her body along the tail until she reached Alvin's hand and started to beat it with her fists, trying to force him to loosen his grip.

It didn't work.

He still held on to the tail like his life depended on it (which it did).

As she continued to fruitlessly beat the hand, Alvin swung himself forward and smacked her face with his free hand. She lost her grip and plummeted.

"ASTRID!"

She fell and spiraled through the air until I saw a streak of blue and yellow fly under her and catch her in mid fall.

"Stormfly!" I could here her yell out in excitement as she steadied herself on the Deadly Nadder's back. Dad and the others must have freed all of the other dragons already. I silently thanked him.

I heard Alvin bellow out in rage. "I HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS!" With his free hand, Alvin drew his sword, raised it and brought it down onto Toothless' tail.

He yelped in pain and we began to frantically lose altitude. I gripped the saddle as hard as I could while Alvin, who dropped the sword due to the sudden loss in altitude, clenched both of his fists onto the tail as we mercilessly spun down to the earth.

Although we were spinning, I could see we are falling straight into the village square where the other Vikings are standing and freeing the last of the dragons from their cages.

Toothless did the best he could to control our fall so I wouldn't be harmed on impact. I looked down and saw the roof of my house approaching fast. Toothless curled up and we collided with the roof. I was thrown from the saddle and slid to a stop atop the rough surface. I looked back up and saw Toothless frantically trying to dig his claws into the shingles but his massive body dragged him downward and he fell off the roof.

He landed on his feet and looked back up at me worried. I looked across to the other side of the roof where I saw Alvin laying and trying to stand back up. He may have dropped his weapon in the sky, but he is still bigger than me.

He managed to regain his footing and glared at me with the intent to take my life. I backed up until I reached the wooden carving of a dragon's head. I stepped onto the head and kept my balance as best as I could. Alvin walked up to me and said "Goodbye kid." He kicked my chest with his massive foot and sent me sprawling to the stone steps below me.

Before my body made contact with the ground, Toothless leapt through the air and caught me on his back.

My chest is roaring with pain. No doubt I have at least a cracked rib.

"Thanks bud," I mutter while I hold my sides with my arm. I slide off of him as I heard an earth-shattering thud right behind us. Alvin just jumped from the roof and landed perfectly on his feet right behind us! He ran over to us as Toothless shot a few fireballs at him. They all missed and blew holes into the side of my house.

He reached us and backhanded me in the face, sending me rolling down the hill and into town. I heard him fighting with Toothless. He punched my dragon in the face so many times that I could even feel the pain.

I slid to a stop at the bottom of the hill and the other Vikings finally noticed me. They all started to run over to my side asking if I was ok. Before I could answer them, Alvin was rocketing down the hill, grabbed my neck, lifted me back off the ground, pushed through the massive crowd of Vikings and squeezed. Hard.

He snarled, threw me to the ground and delivered multiple kicks to my already sore ribs. Pain was screaming through my body. When he was done, he grabbed me by the scruff of my neck and lifted me back up. He unsheathed a hidden knife in his belt and raised it high.

Before he delivered the final fatal blow that will surely end my life, he looked to the scared audience of Vikings. "Say goodbye to your dragon whisperer!"

The earth shook.

Alvin looked around confused.

Not ten feet away from us, the Whispering Death created another hole in the ground and flew straight through it, revealing itself once more. The creature's milky eyes stared down onto Alvin as he held me in his hand like a baby kitten.

It roared. Loud. Alvin dropped me and covered his ears from the piercingly loud sound. I ran away from him and reached the front of the crowd, who were watching closely.

The Whispering Death ceased its roar and stared down at the now terrified Alvin.

He turned and ran to the forest. Before he made it to the first tree, the dragon swung its tail and threw a spike at him, penetrating his back. He shouted in pain and collapsed to the ground. The creature flew up behind him, wrapped its tail around his ankle and started to whip his body all throughout the air.

We all watched in amazement as I felt a hand placed on my shoulder. I looked back and saw Astrid, who had just landed Stormfly and walked over to me. She watched along with me as the Whispering Death continued to swing Alvin around like a ragdoll.

When it was done, it threw Alvin to the ground and he landed on his stomach, no doubt knocking all air out of his lungs.

Before Alvin could get back up to his feet, the tail whipped itself around his ankle again and was dragged backwards. The Whispering Death slithered on the ground this time, dragging Alvin behind it like a toy.

Alvin wailed his arms in every direction, panicking, screaming and calling for help. I kind of enjoyed hearing it.

The Whispering Death proceeded to slither forward, looked at me and gave me a full on smile. I smiled back.

The dragon looked down and its teeth began digging into the ground. Its head disappeared into the earth and the long tail followed, dragging down a screaming Alvin along with it. He clawed and grabbed at the dirt, trying to prevent himself from falling down the hole, but

it was no use. The tail successfully dragged Alvin into the hole and his screams slowly began to fade away until they were heard no more.

I sighed. Relieved.

\_He's gone. He's actually gone!\_

"Hiccup, you did it!" Astrid yelled, and cheers from the other Vikings followed. Astrid grabbed me by my shoulders, pulled me into her and she kissed me. She kissed me and held me for as long as she could. When she released me, I heard my dad walk up from behind me, laughing with joy. "Well done son!" He hugged me tight until I yelped from the pain of my ribs. He released me and looked at me with concern.

"Are you ok?"

"I'll be fine. Don't you worry dad," I said, clutching my sides. The cheers died down. We all looked to the horizon and saw the sun starting to peak its head from the water.

"Well, I still think we still have time. Let's go everyone! To the Hall! We must finish the celebration!" The Vikings burst into cheers again and started to run to the Hall.

I walked there with Astrid hand in hand. Toothless ran up behind me and nudged me lightly. I patted his head. "Thank you so much Toothless. You are an incredible dragon."

The three of us walked into the Hall and continued the festival as if nothing happened.

\_Hmm, this night didn't turn out so bad after all.\_

## 15. After the Festival

Gods this was a crazy night. Mildew's dead, so is Savage and Alvin, the Outcasts have left and hopefully won't return, and best of all, I was dancing side by side with the most wonderful person I could ever ask for: Astrid.

That reminds me, I still have to tell Dad and the others about Mildew dying. I'll tell everyone in the morning, they're all having a great time; I don't want to spoil it.

Plus, for once, I'm going to savor every last ounce of this night for as long as I can. For just looking at Astrid's face, her gorgeous smile and waving hair, it just makes me feel good.

We danced for a while more, but my ribs were aching and my head was pounding from the blows I took from Alvin. After the song was finished, I said "Astrid, I feel like death at the moment. Would you mind if I just turn in for the night?" She giggled a little, pulled me in and kissed me gently. "Of course my hero." She winked at me. "I'll see you in the morning."

I walked to the front of the Hall, passing through dancing and drinking Vikings who waved at me and patted my back. I came up to my



dad and told him I was heading off to bed. "Of course son. I'll see you tomorrow." I turned from him and walked out the door with Toothless following me.

I wrapped my arms around my ribs in an attempt to hug the pain away. Toothless noticed me wincing and looked at me with big puppy dog eyes. "Don't worry, I'm fine Bud." I scratched his chin and he let out a purr.

We walked up the steps to my house and I looked at the damage that we caused in our fight with Alvin. Shingles were lying on the grass and torn apart, massive burning holes were blown into the walls and the wooden dragonhead that rests on the roof was almost torn to shreds. Looks like my dad and I have some chores to do tomorrow.

We walked through the doors, ran upstairs and we each lay down on our own beds and drifted quickly into a peaceful sleep.

I woke up feeling even worse than I did going to bed. My head felt like Gobber was smashing an anvil on it many times and my ribs were screaming in an immaculate chorus of pure pain.

I slowly lifted my head from my pillow and looked down at my chest and noticed that my suit that I had been wearing was taken off. On my chest were multiple ribbons of bandages overlapping each other. Dad must have had Gothi the village elder examine me while I was asleep for any serious wounds.

I looked to the table right across from my bed and saw a piece of paper that lists my injuries and the medications I need to take for each.

I put down the paper, got dressed and went downstairs not waking Toothless. I looked over at his tail while I left and noticed a bloodstained bandage was wrapped over it. He's a tough dragon; he'll be all right.

I walk out the doors and see the village cleaning up after last night's battle. Picking up wood or filling up the holes that The Whispering Death left behind. I walked down the stairs and into the village square and Fishlegs came up from behind me and enveloped me in a bear hug. "Hiccup! You're all right!"

The massive teenager released his grip on me and I caught my breath again. "Ow, uh, yes. I am. I hope you had a good time at the festival last night, you know, when you weren't being held hostage by the Outcasts." He nervously laughed. Then he changed the subject. "So, what about The Whispering Death? Will it come back again?"

I glanced over to the hole where it dragged itself and Alvin. "Fishlegs, I may not be able to fully get that thing under control, but I don't think that it'll be bugging us any time soon," I reassured. He smiled gratefully. "I'll meet with you later at the dragon academy for the lesson today," he said as he was running off over to Meatlug.

I walked through the square looking for Astrid. I'm hoping she wasn't mad at me for ditching her at the festival last night. Instead, I bumped into my dad. He looked down at me and smiled. "Mornin' son! How are you feeling?" "A little sore. But I'll be fine." He smiled at

me again. "Now get going, I have a lot to do this morning. Fixing up the house, cleaning up the wood, taking care of Mildew."

I still have to tell him.

"Uh, listen dad, I-" before I finished I saw Mulch and Bucket walking down the hill with a stretcher. Hanging out from the cloth concealing the body was a skinny arm and Bucket was carrying a walking stick on his back. I gulped. "So, I guess you know about Mildew now?" Dad nodded grimly. He may know Mjolnir crushed him, but he couldn't have known about his betrayal and how he made a deal with Alvin.

I sighed and said "Dad." He looked down to me and I told him everything. I told him how Mildew and Alvin were in cahoots and that it was all a part of his scheme to rid the island of dragons.

He looked distraught by the news. "I never would have thought he would do such a thing. I will inform the villagers of this. But not right now. We have important matters to attend to now. Go on Hiccup. I'll see you later." The chief walked over to Gobber and Spitelout and continued to clean up.

I smiled as I walked through the village. Seeing the place so alive just sent a warm feeling through me.

My heart jumped when I felt two arms wrap loosely around my neck and I was gifted with a kiss on the cheek. "Good morning Hero," Astrid said after she let me go and gave me the opportunity to turn around and look her in the eyes. She was wearing her usual clothes, the blue tank top and red leather skirt with spikes. "Good morning Astrid. Are you feeling ok?" Her face lit up. "I've never felt better."

At least she doesn't feel like death today.

We walked around the village with our hands intertwined as we helped pick up scraps of wood or do other jobs the Vikings wanted us to help them with. We passed by Snotlout, Fishlegs, Ruffnut and Tuffnut who were all just chatting and sitting around doing nothing.

The look on Snotlout's face when he saw my hand connected with Astrid's was priceless.

We joined the group and talked about last night. I explained what happened after I leapt onto Toothless and flew after Astrid. Their faces were beaming as I told them the story. "That sounds intense," Ruffnut put in. "I wish I could've blown up a bridge," complained Tuffnut. "If Alvin saw me running straight at him, he would've been all 'look out everyone! It's Snotlout! Back to the boats and retreat!'" Snotlout said boastfully. We ignored him.

We talked for what felt like hours and I loved every second of it.

A few days ago, I was thinking that this year's festival would be a memorable one.

It was, in fact, the best one I've ever had.

I can't wait for next year!

End  
file.